THE EYE-WITNESS

H. BELLOC

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The eye-witness, being a series of descriptions and sketches in which it is attempted to reproduce certain

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BY

H. BELLOC

BEING A SERIES OF DESCRIPTIONS AND SKETCHES IN WHICH IT IS ATTEMPTED TO REPRODUCE CERTAIN INCIDENTS AND PERIODS IN HISTORY, AS FROM THE TESTIMONY OF A PERSON PRESENT AT EACH

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TO

LORD LUCAS

PREFACE

IN the sketches of which this book is composed, the author has attempted, upon the model of one vivid experience, to reconstruct certain passages of the past.

In each he has accumulated as well as he could such evidence for detail as would make an actual presentment of history rather than an aid to its realisation. The hours, the colours, the landscape, the weather, the language, are, as far as his learning permitted, the hours, the colours, the landscape, the weather, the language of the times and places he describes.

The reader will of course distinguish between those episodes in which the actors and events are purely imaginary (as, for example, in "The Christian"); those in which some part only of the actors are real (as in "The Familiar"); and those in which every detail of person and of scene is rigidly historical (as in "Drouet's Ride" or "The *Ark-Royall*").

In all of these, from the purely imaginative to the purely historical, whatever the author could verify has been verified; but he well knows the impossibility of arriving at a complete accuracy where such minute details are attempted.

He has desired in these pages to present successive pictures stretching across the 2000 years of Christian history; in so doing he has been compelled to restrict himself to places with which he was himself familiarly acquainted and to authorities which he had the power to consult. Thus the crossing of the Channel by sail under a light wind (as in "The Two Soldiers") he can claim to know from experience. He has visited the arena in Southern Tunisia which is the scene of "The Christian," and the coast of the Narbonese which is that of "The Pagans." He is familiar with the banks of the Itchen on which "The Saxon School" was built; and the voyage of the Greek traveller whose progress is imagined in "The Barbarians" took place in his own county. He has sailed, as did "The Danish Boat," from the North Sea over the bar of the Three Rivers up Breydon, and so to Norwich, and before the same wind. He has often walked through the thickets in the valley of the Brede, where the soldiers came in "The Night after Hastings." Like all the world he knows the

Roman road to Staines, which is the road to "Runnymede"; the way up from the Weald, through Combe on to Mount Harry, and the aspect of "Lewes" from that height is familiar to him, as is also the approach from the Vale of Glynde: as for the flying buttresses of Westminster (which appear in "The End of Henry IV.") he knows them well. The Madrid of "The Familiar" he has visited in just such a blinding summer; and in those shoals between Calais and Dunkirk, where "The *Ark-Royall*" watched the Armada, he has dropped a little anchor more than once for a few hours. He has passed from the Lakes to the Hudson where was the tragedy of "Saratoga;" he has paced the ranges upon the field where "The Guns at Valmy" were unlimbered; and he has gone upon his feet over the "Guadarrama" by that same road which Napoleon took with his indomitable but half-mutinous army: men who further followed him some six thousand miles.

This long list is only permitted to occupy the space it does in order to assure the reader that the writer has not presumed to set down fancy descriptions of landscapes and of climates which he did not know.

As to historical references, I must beg the indulgence of the critic, but I believe I have not

positively asserted an error nor failed to set down a considerable number of minute but entertaining truths.

Thus the 10th Legion (which I have called a regiment in "The Two Soldiers") *did* sail under Cæsar for Britain from Boulogne, and from no other port. There *was* in those days a great land-locked harbour from Pont-de-Briques right up to the Narrows, as the readers of the "Gaule Romaine" must know. The moon *was* at her last quarter (though presuming her not to be hidden by clouds is but fancy). There *was* a high hill just at the place where she would have been setting that night—you may see it to-day. The Roman soldiers *were* recruited from the Teutonic and the Celtic portions of Gaul; of the latter many *did* know of that grotto under Chartres which is among the chief historical interests of Europe. The tide *was*, as I have said, on the flow at midnight—and so forth.

Similarly, the men who followed the Queen of France's tumbril in the Revolution were the slouching guard I have described in "Mr. Barr's Annoyance"; and that scratching of the pens, that sight of Carnot at full length upon the floor over the maps, which I have put into "Thermidor," is true to the evidence we have, as is the furniture

of that great room in which Europe was transformed.

There is another category of description contained in this book. Apart from detail ascertainable by research it has been necessary, for work of this description, to decide upon doubtful points, where evidence is conflicting and where room for doubt exists. Thus so great an authority as Chuquet places the blowing up of the limbers at Valmy *after* the Duke of Brunswick's abortive charge and probably in the afternoon: I have followed what seems to me the plain conclusion from Kellermann. Similarly, there is no direct evidence as to the exact spot in the pass where the disaster of Roncesvalles took place—we only know that it was on the northern side of the range: my guess at the place, though drawn from a close observation, is but an opinion. There are many such direct assertions (inseparable from the form of narrative) where strict history would state the thing tentatively, admit argument and defend a conclusion by reference and appendix; but none, I think, for which I have not evidence or analogy, nor one which I have not adopted myself only after a close reading of others' views.

I must not further extend this apology for a

chance series of historical essays; it may, however, be of interest to the reader to know that the scene from "The Barricade" has been described to the author by men still living, who fought and were wounded there; while the scene drawn from our English party politics in "The Politician" was carefully studied upon the platform so recently as the year 1906.

KING'S LAND,
1908.

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Upon August 26, B.C. 55, Julius Cæsar sailed from Boulogne with two legions for the Invasion of Britain

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In the year 179 A.D. the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, among the worst of the enemies of the Faith, still lived. The town of Thyrsus in the Province of Africa (now El Djem in Tunis) was the most important of the great towns near the Desert. It has disappeared. A Christian is here supposed suffering martyrdom

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At the end of the fourth century, about 370 A.D., England was highly populated. The official language was Latin; the large garrisons were those of a Roman army. The Catholic Faith was officially accepted, though many of the governing class rejected or smiled at it. This wealthy province (of which East Anglia was one of the wealthiest and most populous parts) was annoyed by incursions of petty barbarian tribes from the north, east and west, eager to enjoy the advantage of a high civilisation. None of these incursions were more irritating than the descent of small pirate boats under the north-east winds of spring from the savage countries beyond the North Sea

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THE PAGANS (About 420 A.D.) 49

Certain old families maintained a Pagan loyalty long after the Empire was officially Christian. The Narbonese, where this scene is laid, was a very wealthy and highly Romanised part of Gaul. From this part sprang the family of Charlemagne, whose ancestors were of the kind here described. The name "Port of Venus" has been preserved in "Port-Vendres"

THE BARBARIANS (About 700 A.D.) 61

In the latter part of the fifth century (towards 500 A.D.) the civilised parts of Western Europe were finally overrun by uncivilised or half-civilised tribes from beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire. Their numbers were not great, but the disturbance sufficed to upset the balance of social order, and everything decayed. No part suffered more than Britain, where savages from Scotland and uncouth pirates from the North Sea joined with half-subdued tribes in the province itself to pillage and ruin society. For over a hundred years the anarchy was such that Britain disappears from history. Some few of the great towns were not only sacked but actually destroyed, and among these appears to have been Anderida, a garrison and port upon the site of Pevensey in Sussex. In the second half of the sixth century (a hundred years later) there was something of a reaction after all this anarchy: the Roman armies reorganised Africa, and the Roman religion and civilisation re-entered Britain with St. Augustine. Some parts, however, were neglected, and none more than the Sussex seaboard, which did not get back the Mass and the Latin Order till a hundred years after Kent and London.

I here suppose a Greek from Constantinople or New Rome, which was the seat of Empire and highly civilised, visiting Sussex just after the first feeble re-establishment of the Roman religion there. He goes down the Stane Street from London to Chichester, and then, with letters from

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the Bishop of Selsey, he goes along the sea-plain to the mouth of the Ouse, where he takes a boat round Beachy Head to Pevensey

RONCESVALLES (778 A.D.) 73

The Mohammedans having conquered Spain, Charlemagne, the greatest member of the greatest of Gallic Christian families, could do no more than contain them by holding the valley of the Ebro, as upon another frontier he controlled the enemies of Europe by holding the valley of the Elbe. Returning to Gaul by way of the Roman Road and pass (the Imus Pyrenæus) from a campaign in the Spanish March, his rear-guard under Roland was overwhelmed by the mountaineers in the midst of the Pyrenees. This disaster gave rise to the noblest of Christian epics

THE DANISH BOAT (About 780 A.D.) 83

Hardly was Europe creeping back to civilisation when, in the eighth century, a furious assault upon it, far worse than any earlier attack, broke from every side. Scandinavian and Pagan Germans, the Mohammedans, and later roving bands of Mongols attempted to destroy it. The energy of the Gaulish and German ruling family, which culminated in Charlemagne, checked the disaster, but after Charlemagne's death it was renewed more fiercely than ever, and Europe was barely saved by the resistance of Alfred and the Count of Paris more than a hundred years after the first attack. The Faith was the particular object of this invasion of "Roman Land," whether by Arabs and Moors as in Spain, or by Scandinavian pirates as in Britain. In what follows I presume one of the first raids

THE SAXON SCHOOL (The Summer of 1002) . . 95

Winchester was the centre of Saxon England: Hyde, the great Abbey outside the gates, was to Winchester what Westminster was later to London. In what follows a

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school in the neighbourhood, and attached to the Abbey, is imagined, just before the last Danish conquest and harrying of that valley

THE NIGHT AFTER HASTINGS (October 14, 1066) . 103

On October 14, 1066, a great body of men from all parts of Europe, a few of them Italian, many Breton, but most of them French, led by William the Duke of Normandy, who claimed Edward the Confessor's inheritance, defeated, upon a hillside called "Hastings Plain" above the river Brede, the less civilised supporters of Harold, who, under that provincial noble, had marched at full speed from Yorkshire to meet the invaders. The contest was not determined till very late in the day, and while there was no regular pursuit, the cutting off of laggards and the attempt to prevent the information and reorganisation of the enemy could only be pursued after sunset

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On June 15, 1215, the League of Officials, wealthy merchants, higher clergy and Barons met the King, John (against whom they had risen after the defeat of his foreign policy), on the far side of the Thames, opposite Staines, having marched that morning from London. He there assented to a *Great Charter*, confirming their privileges, which they had drawn up for him to sign. John, after signing, took the field, hammered the rebels, and would, but for an untimely death, have easily recovered the rights of the central government against the aristocracy

THE ARMIES BEFORE LEWES (May 13, 1264) . . 125

John's son, King Henry III., a man of great piety, disturbed by yet another rebellion of his Barons and the wealthy of London, after certain successes came down to the Cinque Ports and so up over Cuckmere from the east to Lewes with his army in early May 1264. The Barons' army and their allies from London lay at Fletching in

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the Weald of Sussex to the north of Lewes and of the Downs, under the guidance of Simon de Montfort, a mystic, son of that great French noble who, a generation before, had destroyed the Albigensian Heretics. On May 12, this rebel army received the challenge of the king and on the 13th it broke camp and approached the escarpment of the Downs, in order to reach Lewes, where the King's army lay

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Upon August 26, 1346, Edward III., retreating with some twenty-five thousand men or less upon the sea after a successful raid in Northern France, was caught up by the French king, in pursuit, at Cressy (the French Crécy), in Ponthieu. He beat off this host, quite four times his own in number, with complete success

THE END OF HENRY IV. (March 19, 1413) . . 159

On March 19 (or 20), 1413, Henry IV., who had usurped the crown by treason from his cousin Richard fourteen years before, died in the Abbot's Chamber at Westminster. He was prematurely aged, affected with a horrible disease and suffering from epileptic fits, the last of which seized him as he prayed, on March 19, at King Edward's shrine in the Abbey. In his time and just before it, the division between poor and rich had been violent; religious visionaries had accentuated this feeling and mixed it with Messianic, Apocalyptical and Mystical solutions of social

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problems. Also in his time and thence onward the official suppression of philosophical discussion became habitual. In one contemporary account sailors boasted that his body, on its way to funeral, had been thrown overboard

THE FAMILIAR (May 1588) 169

In the second week of May 1588, the fleet of transports (the Armada) which was to sail from Spain and to carry troops from the Netherlands to invade England, lay ready in the Tagus. In what follows is imagined a scene in the Royal Palace at Madrid where council is held as to the date of sailing

THE "ARK-ROYALL" (July 27, 1588) . . . 181

The *Ark-Royall* was, during the struggle with the Armada, the flag-ship of the English Lord Admiral, a landsman, one of the Howards, a family recently grown very powerful through wealth taken from the Church

THE APPRENTICE (January 30, 1649). . . . 191

Charles I. was executed on this day upon a scaffold outside the second window on the north of Whitehall Banqueting Hall, at four in the afternoon

THE END OF THE STUARTS (December 10, 1688) . 201

The kings of England had held by legitimate descent, or on the plea of it, from the Conquest to the close of 1688, when the landed and rich merchant classes, relying on the strong religious support of London and upon the unpopularity of the king in the West, called in a foreign army and transferred the crown from James II., the last legitimate king, to his daughter and her husband. The prime act of James's fall was to send away his wife and child, himself following

SARATOGA (October 6, 1777) 213

General Burgoyne, in progress to cut the American Rebellion in two by a march from the St. Lawrence to the sea,

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was successful in all the first part of his campaign. His gross dilatoriness in effecting the short portage between the lakes and the Hudson gave the enemy time to concentrate upon that river. He was hemmed in on the heights of Saratoga ; discovered, in a reconnaissance upon October 6 (here described) that he could not retreat, and on the 16th surrendered ; the French were thus led to support the rebels, who obtained their independence within six years

DROUET'S RIDE (June 21, 1791) 223

Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, King and Queen of France, attempting to fly from Paris in the midst of the Revolution, were intercepted, just as they reached safety, by one Drouet, who galloped near midnight by a short cut through the forest to the town of Varennes and roused the populace

THE GUNS AT VALMY (September 21, 1792) . . 233

The allied Prussian and Austrian armies, advancing without difficulty against a French force of little military value, easily turned its position, and were within striking distance of Paris, there to put an end to the Revolution. When, in turning to destroy the French force left behind them after the turning movement, they met with a check, due to rapid French artillery fire from the plateau of Valmy. This slight interference with the elaborate Prussian plans threw such confusion into the allied armies as soon necessitated a retreat, which changed the history of the world

MR. BARR'S ANNOYANCE (October 16, 1793) . . 243

Marie Antoinette, formerly Queen of France, was executed just after midday on October 16, 1793. Negotiations for the import of American grain into France (then suffering from war and famine) were being conducted by the Revolutionary Government. An American agent is here supposed suffering an adventure on that day

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Gornay (June 1794) 255

Among the prisoners executed at the end of the Terror was a young cavalryman, Gornay, whose name was not upon the list of the condemned, though it was upon that of the imprisoned. It is not known how the error was committed, nor why its victim did not protest

Thermidor (July 1794) 267

A committee of the Revolutionary Parliament was chosen in the worst crisis of the war with Europe to be Dictator and to administer martial law. Robespierre, the idol of the moment, was nominally a member, but his love of popularity interfered with the desire of each of the others to make his own department (War, Finance, &c.) workmanlike. He came more and more rarely, at last only to ask for favours for *protégés*, and finally the committee was determined to be rid of him and he fell from power

Napoleon in the Guadarrama (December 22–23, 1808) 279

Napoleon in Madrid, believing the English army with Sir John Moore to be at Valladolid, and rightly judging that they must retreat at full speed to the sea through Astorga, determined to cut them off by forced marches, the first of which was undertaken three days before Christmas 1808, and is here described. He failed to intercept the English retreat because his information was erroneous. Sir John Moore, as a fact, was at Sahagun, and instead of having to march two miles to Sir John's one, which he could easily achieve, success demanded four, an impossibility

The Barricade (May 1871) 291

The last three days of the suppression of the Commune consisted in charges of the Regulars against the barricades of the Communists, and among the last of these to be captured were those upon the slopes of Montmartre, a high isolated hill upon the extreme north of Paris overlooking the whole city

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THE POLITICIAN (January 11, 1906) 301

On the fifth of December 1905 Mr. Balfour's Administration, which had carried to a successful and prosperous conclusion the South African war and had admitted the Boer Republics into our Imperial System, went to the country. During the general election following many meetings were held, and among them this, in a northern town, upon the 11th of January, 1906

MOTIVE OF THIS BOOK

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THIS story that follows was told in the White Horse at Storrington, a small town of the Weald.

Three men were talking. First they had talked of the Education Bill, and from that they had come to the General Election, and from that to discussing whether men were happier under one system of government than under another, and from that to the power of the mind—to the all-power of the mind—and from that to the Reality of Experience. All these things were discussed in the White Horse at Storrington; when one of the men said: "I will tell you something that happened to me once."

He thought a little while, and then added: "It happened three Thursdays ago." And at once, without giving the others time to collect themselves, he plunged in rapidly thus:

"You will remember how hot it was three

Thursdays ago. I was walking with my ashplant from Thakeham here, and when I came to the little dense wood near Roundabout I was so oppressed by the weather that I thought I would sleep. So I went into the wood and lay a little while with my head on my hand looking at the deep purple clouds, which were full of thunder, in the west, and then in a little while I went to sleep. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

"You know that there is a phase between sleeping and waking when the mind is very conscious, not only of its own existence but also of every physical impression (for instance, it is acutely sensible to noise), but during which one does not choose to move, and during which, to any one who saw one, one would seem to be still fast asleep. I had come suddenly out of my sleep into this condition when I appreciated that I was not lying still. There was a regular swing beneath me by which my head was now much higher than my feet, and again dropped back almost, but not quite, to a level with them. I had for some minutes (they may have been seconds) no curiosity on this, for I had quite forgotten where I was, until a

slight nausea took me. It was not grave, for I am used to the sea, but it was enough to disturb me. At the same time, as I spread out my right hand uneasily, though I had not yet opened my eyes, I felt a damp roughness under my fingers. I threw out my other hand lazily; it came upon cold iron; then I opened my eyes wide and at the same instant I felt a sharp breeze on my face and with it the touch of spray.

"I had opened my eyes at a moment in the swinging which I have described when my body was nearly level. I could see, as I lay, nothing but blue sky, very blue sky and clear, with a wind going over it and one or two driven clouds which were quite white. It was coldish weather. At once, as the downward swing came and my head was lifted, I saw a vivid belt of brown and white sea running before the tail end of a gale, and in the same glimpse, though for some reason I could hardly move my head, I saw that around me was a ship's deck and that a ship's bulwarks stood within a yard of my feet. I could also see an edging of sacks upon either side of me, and, moving one hand slightly, I felt beneath my head a hugger-

mugger of rope ; all the while I could smell and feel the damp and the salt with which my clothes were scattered.

" The swinging was regular. I had seen that belt of sea for the third time, and had been thus staring for just the space in which a hulk will roll, recover, and roll again in the trough of the sea, when I heard a loud explosion somewhat behind me and on my right, and with it the deck upon which I was trembled, and one could hear the rumbling of heavy little wheels. Two men, whom I could not see, cried out together in French, but it was French with an accent that I have never heard, and some one from far off replied to them or commanded them in a totally different tongue, which sounded to me a little like Welsh, only sadder. I must tell you that this gunshot was fired as we heeled over towards the horizon, and when the deck on which I lay came back again more level and showed the freeboard of the hulk well above the water, then came that running of little heavy wheels which must have meant that they were hauling back a twelve-pounder to reload. Meanwhile, beyond all these clear and neighbour-

ing sounds was a loud and confused jumble of cries, commands and running naked feet, the whole merged into the noise made by the sea as it banged against us right abeam: for there seemed to be no way on the ship.

"You may imagine how hard I tried to turn my head, for the whole thing was as fresh and new and strange to me as a thing could possibly be, but as I tried to do so I felt so acute a pain in the movement of my neck, that I dropped my chin again into its original and cramped position upon my chest. As I did so I felt the unmistakable smart, the slight relief of tension and at the same time the warm trickle upon the skin which mean that one has opened a wound, and so truly was I living in that new life that I remember thinking to myself: 'Curse it! I have opened that wound again!'

"Behind me the gun fired again, and this time with a slight change of aim, for the ricochet struck within my vision, topping a big, bursting wave about four hundred yards off, and immediately after I could see, closer by, the advance of a ship.

" Two of her masts were standing, the third was shot away, but her rigging was little damaged, and there were but few shot-holes in her close canvas. In spite of the loss of her mizzen she leaned pretty heavily to the wind, and since her mainsail was, of course, gone, she carried the English colours from a makeshift of a signal halyard on the main. One would have said as she advanced into the belt of sea (which I caught sight of with every roll) that she was a transfigured vessel, for her sails were not dingy but full of glory from the setting sun, whose colours I now saw for the first time reflected upon her canvas. She had not come well abreast of us when she bore away a little, and immediately I saw flashes here and there, both from her deck and from the upper line of ports beneath it. Her lower ports were closed.

" I dare say that on her log she called it a broadside, but I am here to testify, if ever her name is known, that she was wounded for all her finery, for the broadside was very disjointed. Anyhow, just as the smoke rose and half hid her lower rigging, but before the gale had blown it away, I heard two heavy thuds, one of which was followed

by the slow bending inward and then the crashing down of a portion of the bulwark at my feet. The edge of a panel came upon my leg, but it came slowly and did not hurt me; moreover the weight of it was supported by an iron stanchion upon which it fell.

"There was little reply from our side. There came a good deal of shouting from behind me, and from what I judged to be, by the motion of the ship, the forward part, but no gun was fired, and one could hear no distinct command. A few of those naked feet ran up the decks not far from my head. I could hear their steps upon the wet planking, and I could feel the vibration of the wood.

"The vessel before us, which had come a little into the wind, went off again, and I knew that she was preparing for another piece of combined fire. It came, and as I waited for its effect, there seemed to come a report infinitely louder, all around me as it were, taking up the whole air and darkening it, and shocking me into an instant vitality which was at the same time a complete confusion. I thought in a sort of way of my wound and forced

myself half upright, but as I did so, still quite blind, or, as it seemed to me, in an impenetrable darkness, I knew that I had torn it again. Where there had before been a trickle I now felt a rush of blood, and that awful weakness and loss of self which comes from a sudden spending of blood fell upon me.

" I opened my eyes with the glance which men give as they despair, and I again saw clearly the branches of trees, the thunder-clouds, and the hot sky of Sussex.

" For a little while I still felt the weakness which was, perhaps, only the weakness of my sleep. It passed away, I got up and walked and came into this town.

" What do you make of that experience ? "

When he had asked this question he continued silent for a little while, and he got no answer. He added : " It was as real as any reality that I have known . . ."

His face, as he spoke, and his accent were the face and accent of a man remembering something recent, detailed and clear ; and surely what had happened to him was this, that time had overlapped

on him . . . he had been on board the *Jacobin* just at the end of the fighting on June 1, 1794.

Hearing such a tale I wondered whether it might not be possible, by an effort of the will as by an accident, to live for some moments in the past and to see the things that had been, stand and live before one. In such an attempt and from such an occasion I began to write the passages which are now collected in this book.

THE TWO SOLDIERS

AUGUST 26, B.C. 55

Upon August 26, B.C. 55, Julius Cæsar sailed from Boulogne with two legions for the invasion of Britain

The King's Library

THE TWO SOLDIERS

AUGUST 26, B.C. 55

THE night was very warm in Picardy, for August was not yet done, and the heated air of the day still quivered over the bare stubble of the hillsides upon either side of the great landlocked harbour, when that famous regiment, the Tenth, the greatest of the Roman Legions, stood formed along the quay; along that quay lay for a mile and more, all the way from Pont-de-Briques northwards, a great mass of transports with their gangways fixed and everything ready for going aboard. The waning quarter-moon shone fully upon the ranks of men, but she was already red and near the horizon, soon to set beyond that main hill to the west which hid the sea. It was not yet midnight.

As the men stood at ease in the ranks talking to each other in low tones, a non-commissioned officer came rapidly down the water front, glancing with quick eyes to note, where the lanterns shone on them, the numbers of the companies; for these were marked in rough white figures upon little

boards which stood in the ground. Then when he found the one he wanted he approached his comrade in command and communicated an order. That comrade turned and called out in Latin two names, whereat two men, certainly not Roman, and men whose true names were very different from their regimental sound, stepped out quickly and stood together. They were the artificers of their section, and were drafted for the catapults upon the faster ships, the galleys that lay towards the mouth of the harbour. The one man, who was short, very broad-shouldered, bullet-headed, vivacious and young, had for his name Kerdoc; the other, who was tall, softer in the flesh, with heavy limbs, and pale, rather uncertain blue eyes, was called Chlothar; the first was from the Beauce, from the edge of that plain, half a day's march or more beyond Chartres and the upper waters of the Eure, the second from the eastern slopes of the Vosges, where a cosy little wooden village had nourished his boyhood, high upon the mountain side from whence could be seen far off the forests of the Allmen.

Many other artificers so selected were drafted in until a column of perhaps a hundred had been formed, then they marched them up the long wharf of wooden piles, got them aboard the first

fast galley, bade them ship the gangway, and at last left them free as the sailors; some of them cast off, some of them ran to stand at the halyards.

The moon had set when all these preparations were accomplished, but the air was still very warm, the stars showed but thinly through the summer haze; from the south-west right up the valley of the harbour towards the sea blew a faint but steady breeze. The galleys weighed, and with very gentle and rhythmical strokes of the oars they dropped in file down the sluggish ebb of the neap tide till they came to the narrow mouth of this great port of Icht and took the open sea.

Kerdoc and Chlothar, the elder and the younger, the short man and the tall, the dark man and the fair, leant over the bulwark of the weather side and watched, with some fear but with a great exhilaration, this new element the sea.

Slight as the wind was, there was not a little jump upon the bar of the Liane, and each of them had a qualm of sickness, but very soon, when they were well out of the narrows, the galley was put before the wind and the steady run of the vessel eased them. All that they heard and saw filled them with life: the new noise of the water alongside, the creaking of the cordage, the high sing-song cries of the sailors when an order was given

to haul, and the even beat of the oars; as also, above them, an infinite expanse of sky; before them, as it seemed, an infinite expanse of water in the dusk of the night. In one place they could see over their shoulders the indistinct mass of Grisnez rising above the coast and blotting out the few horizon stars; upon all the rest of the ring around them, from the extreme south-west to the east, there was nothing but a hazy line where the dark sea mingled with the night sky. Very soon the motion of the ship seemed to change, the sea grew easier, though the wind was steady, and the bows took the water with a longer sweep, because the tide had turned and was now running slowly eastward up the Straits. In an hour it began to be light.

First, the little seas showed fresh and grey under the beginnings of dawn, then colours slowly grew both upon the water and upon the ships around; at last could be made out like a picture the whole sweep of the Gallic shore, for they had gone but few miles under the light air and against the ebb during the last hours of darkness.

With the flood tide, however, and the breeze still holding they made more rapidly out toward mid-Channel, and when the sun sprang up above the eastern edge of the world they could clearly see

before them the new shore which they had hitherto but dimly perceived on specially clear days from the heights of the camp above Boulogne. It was a long, low line of dirty white, as yet miles and miles away, and sinking at either end into a flat that did not show above the sea. With the exhilaration of the daylight the conversation of the two men grew animated and full. They conversed in the Pidgin Latin of the regiment, the one with the sharp hammered accents and thin vowels of the Gaul, the other with the slurred gutturals of the German.

And first they talked of the miseries and misfortune of the service, and agreed upon their bad luck that they should have been picked out of their regiment (a hard enough service, God knows !) to herd with common barbarians, who were not soldiers but mechanics, for each had (though it was not the form of the army to show it) a swelling pride in the Tenth ; and, indeed, it was a famous regiment, and destined to an astonishing destiny —for when all of those then serving should be dead, eighty-seven years later and more, the Tenth were to garrison Jerusalem and to furnish the guard on Calvary.

Next, then, as the morning grew and the sun of August rose, throwing long shadows of ships

athwart the sea, they talked of the danger of such voyages ; talking bombastically like landsmen, and thinking that in this calm night they had passed through perils.

" But I cannot drown," said Kerdoc wisely, wagging his head. " I have a charm against water, and I cannot die by it ! "

" Show me your charm," said Chlothar, a little sulkily, for he was jealous of so much power.

Kerdoc hesitated somewhat ; it was a great confidence ; then he remembered how long Chlothar and he had marched side by side—nearly a year altogether—and he furtively pulled a little bronze medal from his neck, where it hung by a chain, and showed it in the palm of his hand to his comrade. There was a crescent moon stamped upon it, with a star on either tip, and in the curve of the crescent the face of a goddess.

Chlothar looked at it with horror. He thrust out the fore and little fingers of his right hand, clenching the others, and put his hand out over the sea, making the sign of the Horned God who protected him from the influence of the Moon ; then he said in a slow, but angry, manner : " Put it away ; I will not look at a figure of the Moon. He is evil ! "

Kerdoc was stung in his quick nature by the

insult, but proud in his vanity at the effect and power of his charm; his vanity conquered, and he said with somewhat ridiculous swagger: "The priests gave it me; or rather," he added slyly, "they gave it me as against a rich offering. I got it in the Grotto where they sacrifice to the Virgin who shall bear a Son."

The German knew that famous place, and could not avoid an expression of respect. Kerdoc quickly took advantage of that mood to exalt himself.

"That Grotto," he said, "is within the limits of my tribe; my mother had a cousin who was priest there underground."

Chlothar said nothing, but looked sullen for some time, and then said brutally: "Time may come and the army will do hurt in your village!" It was a common taunt in the regiment against all newly enlisted men, and Kerdoc let it pass by, but he was still sore when he remembered the gesture the German had made to his Goddess, and for some time there was silence between them, and both men looked over the side.

They were now, however, close under the British shore, and the activity of the men about them, sailors shifting ropes, tautening sheets, or running forward with bare feet to execute a command, showed them that change had come upon their

journey. The wind had dropped, a long smooth swell had taken the place of the small choppy waves, the water was already slack and just upon the ebb again, when—to one command which the trumpets sounded down the line of galleys—the anchors were dropped and the boats swung round east and west, head to stream, all in rank under the chalk walls of Britain.

Upon the skyline along the edge of the cliffs, hiding the burnt summer turf with their multitude, were thousands upon thousands of the islanders.

They kept but a little order; at every few yards among the mass a taller figure showed upon the platform of a chariot, the whole host was moving and seething like a column of ants, and even at that distance could be heard from time to time over the carrying surface of the water a whirl of distant cheers, or more clearly the braying of short conchs blown loudly and discordantly in random defiance. Now and again some one of them would hurl his spear over the edge of the cliff till it fell upon the chalk at the base, or, by some exceptional feat, just passed the tide-line of the sea, and caught the surf where the swell of the high tide broke against the shore.

All this the two soldiers of the Tenth watched curiously. Chlothar said: "I wonder how they

come on!" To him, as to all private soldiers, the indolent prospect of approaching action (however insignificant the action promised to be) was unpleasing.

Kerdoc assumed a different mood. "I can tell you," he said, affecting an experience which his youth did not possess, "they are Gwentish men; I have heard them called Gwentish men. Now men of the Gwent fight by rushes, and are easily broken. We have some such to the north of us at home. They cannot break a line; it is all looks and shouting. My father has fought against Gwentish men," he added apologetically, seeing a look of bovine doubt in Chlothar's eye, and recognising that his criticism of the fighting had been vague; "I do not say that I have, but my father has. Sometimes the men of our village would fight them in a band, and sometimes two by two for a prize."

* * * * *

The sun rose to his meridian and declined, the fleet still lay upon the oily sea under the heat at anchor, when toward mid-afternoon the breeze rose again, and as it rose the galleys slowly swung round, bringing their sterns from west to east as the tide returned. With that moment was perceived, after so many hours, the group of the heavy transports

bowling up from the south-west with the wind and the sea together, but of the cavalry that should have appeared to the left of that fleet in the little ships from Ambleteuse there was not a sign.

A pinnace set out from a central galley to meet the newcomers with orders, and on the deck of that galley stood the great awning of Tyrian cloth which covered Cæsar.

THE CHRISTIAN

179 A.D.

In the year 179 *A.D. the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, among the worst of the enemies of the Faith, still lived. The town of Thyrsus in the Province of Africa (now El Djem in Tunis) was the most important of the great towns near the Desert. It has disappeared*

THE CHRISTIAN

179 A.D.

IN the year 179 of our salvation, but 933 of the Foundation of the City, there came in from the bare and burnt countryside into the town of Thyrsus, in the province of Africa, a young man, fat, wealthy and good-natured, bearing the absurd name of Psyttyx. He had on a beautiful white cloak, caught up on his shoulder by a brooch made of a large amethyst, and engraved with magical signs. Round the edge of this cloak was a narrow purple band. There walked by his side in a familiar manner an aged slave, dressed in an expensive way, and wearing those boots which the Gauls had made fashionable in Rome itself, but which only a foolish vanity would make a man wear on the edge of the Sahara.

The old slave grumbled as he went, but this did not disturb the smiling face of the fat youth, who seemed contented with the world in general; and in particular with his present business, which was to meet at a tavern just within the gates of

the city certain gladiators who were the next day to fight in the arena.

He and his slave passed through the gate, where there was a jostling of every kind of man, Scandinavian mercenaries, a dull German Centurion of the Guard, negroes and Nomads from the sands; he turned at once on the left to the little tavern and was greeted by the innkeeper, whom he greeted in return. Seated at a wooden table were a dozen men, among whom a huge Illyrian was prominent with his brutal, happy face, and next him a small agile Greek with a black pointed beard and restless eyes. There also was a long-jawed Iberian with very short hair and a cruel solemnity of face, and a Syrian who looked so soft one might have thought him a moneylender—but on three occasions he had killed his man, for he was very dexterous with the curved sword, and would fight with no other. Separate from these and sitting quite a yard apart from them was a person of a very different sort. One could tell him at once for a freedman. He was awkward in his gestures and nervous and shy. He also was eating and drinking as the others, but apologetically, as it were, with his cup half full and playing with his plate. This man was a Christian. He was of no great size of body, and seemed even more ill-chosen

than the Syrian for the fight that was to be held on the morrow.

Psyttyx, as he sat down among them all, gazed curiously on this figure, for, like all men whose wealth has permitted them education and travel, he was not offended but interested by exceptional beings. They raised their cups in salutation to Psyttyx, and he, when he had called for wine and water, raised his, saluting them in return. But he could not keep his eyes from wandering perpetually towards the stranger, though his business was with the others, several of whom he maintained at his own expense, and upon all of whom he had made bets, one way or the other; upon the Illyrian in particular he had a book which gave odds on for his survival the next day, and evens that he would not be wounded; a foolish bet, for this big man was somewhat clumsy.

The Illyrian greeted him most noisily, like a sort of brother, the Greek most courteously; the Syrian alone betrayed an obsequious manner distasteful to our Western idea, but one already gaining upon the Roman world when a poor man spoke to a rich one. The others nodded or murmured his name. The Christian alone sat silent.

"Well now, Psyttyx," said the Illyrian in a

coarse accent, "here you are up to time, bringing Geta with you, and your absurd name as well." He laughed loudly at this, but the others looked a little frightened.

"It is a good name," said Psyttyx, "and African; and you well know that I do not put in a fiddle-faddle of cognomens, as is too much the custom. Now your name no one knows, and did he know it, he could not pronounce so barbarous a tangle." The laugh was against the Illyrian. Then Psyttyx turned, for he had a soft heart, to the silent stranger and said: "Will you not drink with me?"

"They won't let him drink," sneered the Syrian, "he is a Christian; their priests forbid them this."

"Oh no," said the Christian eagerly; "that is a heresy, I assure you! It is a heresy in special of the bishopric of Ephesus and has been condemned."

"What on earth is all this?" said Psyttyx, greatly puzzled and beginning to be amused.

The Christian, seeing that he had made himself ridiculous, was silent and blushed.

"They sent him here," said the Illyrian. "He did not come of his own accord."

"Is that so?" said Psyttyx.

The Christian, gulping down a weak sob, nodded his head.

"Was it a penalty?" said Psyttyx, leaning forward.

The Christian shook his head negatively and said in a voice just above a whisper: "No; it was an arrangement."

"He made a magical sign," said the Illyrian with another guffaw, "and they offered him his chance in the arena, and he had the sense to take it. Make that sign again now," he added, leaning forward and looking down the table at the nervous little man, "we won't blab." They all looked curiously at the stranger, but he only shook his head again like a man who fears to make a fool of himself, and who wishes that he were elsewhere.

"If you like," said Psyttyx, quite seriously, "I will speak to the magistrates." But the Christian, with an imploring look in his eyes, forbade him. In his heart of hearts he hoped things might go well with him, and he knew that a man who had victory in the arena pleased the populace of the town, and would be more or less immune for the future.

"I thank you heartily," he said in his low voice, and speaking to Psyttyx alone, as though the others were not present, "but I will not risk imprisonment and the loss of the Holy Mysteries."

"What mysteries are those?" said the Greek, vastly interested at once at the mention of the word.

The Christian shook his head again. "We may not mention them," he said. "But," and here an exalted look came into his eyes, "they give us power over life and death, so that we call ourselves the Sons of God."

"It is this damned secrecy of theirs," growled the Illyrian, "which puts people's backs up! No wonder they get badgered!"

"Nonsense," said the Greek shortly, "you must have secrecy if you have mysteries. I have been initiated into three myself," he said with no little pride, "and you," he said, turning to the Syrian, "have you not some such society out East?" The Syrian gave a greasy smile, shrugged his round shoulders and said: "Oh, yes; but only as a matter of form."

"So you are always saying," said Psyttyx shortly, "but it is my idea that you Levantines have cast a sort of net over the Empire with your filthy leagues." Then turning to the Christian he said: "Do come with me now into the Square. We will buy a bunch of flowers and put them on the statue of the Divine Emperor. I will do it, but you will be with me, and it will be publicly

noticed, and you will go free." The Christian shook his head again and two great tears came nto his eyes.

"There you are again," said the old slave. who had not yet spoken. "'Divine Emperor!' Just because you think it gentlemanly with its Army tone! But your father hates the trick and it is my duty to tell you so." Psyttyx was a good deal annoyed and said: "All right, 'the Emperor,' then, if you like."

"He is a good fellow is the Emperor," said the Illyrian, and they all murmured assent; then he added thoughtfully, "but a fool."

"And he rides badly," put in the Greek; "I have seen him." Then he turned to the Christian and abruptly said: "What do you mean by 'power over life and death'? Do you mean a magic that will protect you against death?"

The silent man shook his head again.

"Well, if you can't do that, what on earth is the good of your mysteries?" said the Innkeeper, who was getting interested.

"Tell me," said the Greek, "and do speak out, what do these mysteries tell you of death?"

"I do not know exactly," said the Christian tentatively, "for I am still learning and am not admitted to the full mystery, but when the Lector

sings out the two words (which are '*audemus dicere*'), I have to go out into the *Narthex*, for I may not hear the *Pater Noster*." They could not restrain their laughter at these uncouth and meaningless words.

"I know what the Christians believe," said the Illyrian loudly (for he was getting drunk). "My aunt that kept a little shop at Solano married one for her second husband, and a plaguey time she had of it. He was given to drink, and he never did a stroke of work."

"The Christians," said the Innkeeper sententiously, "worship a God, called Chrestos, at midnight; they use the magical sign of the Egyptian Tau, and prostrate themselves before an image of a woman standing upon the moon. It is well known that they sometimes immolate children." He said this looking at the Christian with some disfavour, and in the pompous tone of one who has met every kind of man, and who has reserved his wisdom to the end of the conversation.

"Oh rubbish!" said Psyttyx, "the sooner you get these vulgar ideas out of your head the better. Christians are just as other men, with a little masonry like any of ours." They wrangled somewhat, and as they wrangled the Christian looked profoundly miserable, and said several

times, "I do assure you, gentlemen . . . . I do assure you!" Then Psyttyx, who disliked a quarrel, rose, and was prepared to go out, but not before he had asked his own two (which were the Illyrian and the Greek) what money they might need for their expenses before the fight next day. They said they would leave it to him, and he gave them four gold pieces out of a purse his slave carried, for he thought it dishonourable to carry coin upon his person.

* * * * *

Next day at about ten o'clock in the morning, upon the shady side of the amphitheatre, where the wealthier men had reserved a few seats from the public, Psyttyx watched some twenty gladiators going into the arena, from which the horses and animals of a sham hunting scene had just been driven. The slaves ran out and scattered clean sand, and the fight began in couples.

One brace there was which could hardly be said to fight, for the lots had pitted, one against the other, the poor Christian and a little, low-built, broad-shouldered man from Auvergne of the sort that can tame an animal in a day, hard as wood, and perfectly unfeeling. Upon these two, with a sudden movement of pity, Psyttyx riveted his eyes.

The Christian, with his knees weakly bent, shuffling and awkwardly parrying, backed away from the first strokes of his opponent, and, amid the shouts and laughter of the audience, crouched against the wall above which the wealthier spectators sat. They leant forward to see the end of the farce. Above Psyttyx's shoulder the wealthiest Jew of Thyrsus leant with an unpleasant familiarity, his old mouth grinning thinly, and on every side they abused and insulted the wretch who made so poor a show for his life. He had no knowledge at all of how to handle the short sword. He waved it desperately before the Auvergnat, who, smiling slightly and quite at his ease, was choosing where he should strike. He struck just where the neck joins the shoulder, and the Christian went down, his bent knees giving way at once, his hands for one moment supporting the weight of his body, which in another moment had sunk upon the sand as a gush of blood sickened him and spent out the strength of his soul. In that attitude, attempting to lift his head, in spite of the severed muscles, he began the Sign of the Cross. Just before he had completed it, in the mere second which it takes to perform, his final exhaustion was upon him; he groped at his left shoulder, then his hand fell, and he was dead

THE GENERAL OFFICER

ABOUT 370 A.D.

At the end of the fourth century, about 370, *England was highly populated, the official language was Latin, the large garrisons were those of a Roman army. The Catholic Faith was officially accepted, though many of the governing class rejected or smiled at it. This wealthy province (of which East Anglia was one of the wealthiest and most populous parts) was annoyed by incursions of petty barbarian tribes from the north, east and west, eager to enjoy the advantages of a high civilisation. None of those incursions were more irritating than the descent of small pirate boats under the north-east winds of spring from the savage countries beyond the North Sea*

THE GENERAL OFFICER

About 370 A.D.

UPON the bank of a Suffolk river, not two miles from the sea, there was a large Roman house, already tamed by age.

It had been large in its origin, two centuries before; it was larger now. One could trace its first form in the rigid lines of the old tiles; a big quadrangle with two wings.

To these had been added by six generations of men innumerable things. Sheds had decayed and had been partly renewed; here there was a pretty gate, quite new, and more in the scheme of the whole; there statues in the false taste of an earlier time were set too formally along a central avenue; while all around a mass of roofs, of every colour and age, showed how the place had spread.

It was the spring of the year; a sound, cold wind blew off the North Sea, and March was not yet ended. It was long since Julian had died, and, in a fashion, the new order had been heard of here. There was a pride in the memory of Constantine,

much official talk of the Church, but no missioner had come to the place, even before the persecution, and as to those who had abandoned the gods, the gods so abandoned were not so much the gods of the cities as the gods of the woods. Half the gentry of the cities still worshipped Mithras, but in the squares of wild land between the great roads first one tribe, then another, had followed its chief and had taken on the new Rites of Immortality and all the mysteries of Christ. Such things appealed to them, and their legends were already mixed with the story of the Lord. The sacraments they already knew.

But into this great house had come nothing of these things. It was the house of a General Officer, to whom had been confided, from his father's time, and perhaps from further back still, the government of one shore.

* * * * *

I could not to-day describe that shore, so much have Time and the sea destroyed it; at least I could not describe it by our known coast-line. But I may put it thus: that this noble's writ and jurisdiction ran from the beginning of the great wall that bounds the Wash, onward and southward down Norfolk till one came to the mouth of the Three Rivers. Here was a broad estuary very

free from storms and guarded at the entry by two forts ; it is Breydon Water now. Then, on southward, a line of low cliffs ran where now everything is covered by the sea, until at last one came to a good river-harbour, where, for centuries later, during the silting up of the gravel and the sand, men continued to talk of the "old town," the "Ald-borough"—and that is its name to-day.

In the valley of that stream, and, as I have said, two miles from the noise of the sea, was built the villa.

Upon that March day and evening there was very little to disturb the home. The ploughing was long over by nightfall.

The roads were safe. The fields all about them were too populous and too well garnered to affect the fears of any.

Sacrifice had been offered (for the day demanded it), and things were ready in the darkening house and in the quarter of the slaves for the last songs and for sleep.

At their table the master of the place and his sons ate together ; their women with them. The wind had fallen with the sun. The pipes beneath the floor so warmed their room that the air of a British March entered pleasantly through the small round windows, moving the curtains but

slightly, and blowing but now and then upon the wicks that floated in their melted tallow; for oil was too dear for burning.

One of the young men half complained, and said that no man could live without oil: he quoted Greek to the purpose.

His brother, older and more used to the North (for the younger had spent all his boyhood in Gaul), quoted another line from the same divine Poet, to the purpose that wine also was necessary to man.

"But wine we have!" said the younger.

"Yes!" said the older, smiling. "But no oil!"

Their father told the one that he knew nothing of the frontiers yet, the older that he was not used to them.

The women talked of old news, and were weary to hear any mention of these wilds. The rude tesselated patterns of the floor at their feet and the rough textures offended them.

Much more were they disgusted at the clumsy slaves, some dark, some red, all uncouth, Christian and local, that attempted to serve the board. The women would perpetually have rebuked them but that the master of the house forbade all complaint, believing his power on this

edge of a mysterious sea to depend upon nothing less than violence.

* * * * *

Their ill meal was ended. The women had gone to their rooms. The laughter of a local game, soldiers' Latin and German and British dialects all mixed, came from the slaves' buildings; off half a mile to seaward the small square barracks sent a faint echo; when, gradually, over the cloudy and driven sky spread a glare that was not seen at first within the curtains of the little room, where the commander and his two sons still sat at bad wine and slow converse. A gust blew up the curtain of an arch. The eye of the old soldier saw that light at once. He rose and said: "They have lit the Beacon!"

His elder son rose with him, annoyed, but saying nothing.

His younger son openly complained.

"It is the third time," he cried, "since I am back from Gaul that you have come to nothing with such signals!"

His father was already in the stables and giving orders for the saddling before his words were done.

The two lads followed. Two little horses were ready for them also, and they must needs mount: it was orders. The one was a garrison horse, an

" Emperor's horse " as the regimental joke went, bred by the State, vicious and old : the other was a finicky African thing that the younger son had won at a bet in the circus of Rheims, and had brought home for extravagance : he would not ride another. He spent his time as he mounted and rode out of the stable yard cursing this sham " duty."

On ahead rode his father with one slave.

When, in a little while, they had come to the barracks, and the General Officer had found the little force under light arms, and with them a brown centurion—not a gentleman, ready, but a little alarmed—the General Officer asked news. He could hear no other news than that the Beacon was alight—which he knew. The posts were stretched for miles along the shore. " Has there been news from Caistor ? " " Nothing, sir." " Are the three next posts warned ? " " Yes, sir." " How many all told ? "—the centurion would undertake no authority beyond his own. " Quite enough to repel, sir." " Well, then," said the man responsible for so much more, for the big inland garrison, and for all the concentration of that coast, " get forward. I will come behind along the road."

The men marched out toward the glare of the

light along the paved way; the General Officer and his sons and his slave followed, riding.

The Beacon appeared enormous as they neared it.

It glared 50 ft. above them on its spire of beams in its open basket of iron, and its light showed the tumbling waste of the bar, and white horses for some half-mile out to sea. No ship of the Pirates appeared—but one must recently have been seen or the Beacon would not have been fired.

Very far off down the coast, toward the gap where is now Orford Haven, another light had begun to twinkle, and there was a nearer blaze on the Onion. To the north the cliff of Southwold shone.

The General Officer bade them bring the two watchers of the Beacon, and when they came asked them what they had seen. "Two ships, sir." "How long ago?" "One not a minute before you came, the other long since." Even as they spoke one of the men cries out with a German cry and pointed to the sea. A long black line, very low, lifted forward in a carved fantastic-headed dragon shape, came into the blaze of the Beacon and tried the bar. She answered badly; the lumpy seas of the bar caught her and buffeted her—she veered off; but in that moment the Romans had seen in

the ruddy light of the high fire above them ten shields along her sides and the faces of strange men.

* * * * *

They waited all night; the Beacons glaring, the men cursing the futility of such a guard, the General Officer patient and silent; sending but two posts, one north, one south, to pass the news along all the coast to the Wash one way and to the Thames the other.

It was the very cold and sickly dawn of a late day before they turned back home. As the light broadened the space of the North Sea was all before them and not a sail upon it.

The Pirates had departed. The General Officer rode homeward with his sons. When they had got to stables again and the yawning slaves had unsaddled, the younger son said to the elder: "What an affair!"

His eyes were drawn and wrinkled under the new day.

He looked dissipated from his one night of soldiering.

The elder son answered: "Father must. There's no promotion without it. Besides which, he believes in it."

They went into the house and found their room.

"How many have you caught since last December year, when I left for Gaul?" said the younger as he turned to sleep.

"Well . . . one—in a way." "How 'in a way'?" "Well—he got off, but we took his landing-party—two men!"

The younger son laughed loudly, the elder less loud, but he laughed. The next day the alarms were over, and they took the road to the great garrison town on the Colne for the games. There were lions shown and one elephant, but he would not fight

THE PAGANS

ABOUT 420 A.D.

Certain old families maintained a Pagan loyalty long after the Empire was officially Christian. The Narbonese, where this scene is laid, was a very wealthy and highly Romanised part of Gaul. From this part sprang the family of Charlemagne, whose ancestors were of the kind here described. The name "Port of Venus" has been preserved in "Port-Vendres"

THE PAGANS

ABOUT 420 A.D.

A CLEFT in those steep rocks which are the last of the Pyrenean hills where they fall into the Mediterranean was still called the Port of Venus, although the high statue of the goddess, which had stood upon the low marble quay above the tideless water, was now since fifty years cast down; the fishermen could see it glimmering in rare days upon the floor of the port below.

To the south of that haven, upon a level stretch of easy shore, stood a house which had long harboured the chief owner of the fields about the town. This house was wide-spreading and low; a great extent of red tiles on its flat roofs, sobered in colour, made it look like a little city against the intense blueness of the sea, and it was divided everywhere into courts, both for the gentlemen and for the slaves, and there was a court for guests also—for such as might come northward by the road from Spain or southward from Narbo. The house was all built of those small, thin bricks which

ST. IGNATIUS HOUSE OF STUDIES LIBRARY

the small Roman hand could raise with such precision; toward the sea low colonnades of Grecian stone diversified a front the windows of which were small arched windows lighting the private rooms of that delightful dwelling.

Here great wealth, a strong tradition, and an inherited tenacity of character had forbidden the awful legend of the Roman State to fail. Here the gods, of the city at least, still received a somewhat weary and half-disdainful but punctilious worship; and here the Symbols of the Family, images which had wandered centuries ago from Italy across the sea, heard daily and nightly a passionate reverence and unfailing prayers. But all around the great life of the plain which the Canigou overlooks, protects and unifies had opened first to the enthusiasm, later to the plain convention, of the Faith: its ministers were everywhere the summit of the village life, and the officials in their careful and strict hierarchy bound up with their every act an observance of Catholic ritual as a testimony to their loyalty and to the presence, in spirit at least, of the Sacred Palace. The Bishop also, travelling in great pomp over this garden of the Rousillon in the early autumn days, when everything was garnered, but a great heat still hung over the land, had brought him and his train the full

majesty of that eternal society which very visibly had changed, which none could conceive of as ending, and in which the mind of every man, from the Lothians to the Euphrates, reposed. The Empire was Christian.

Within that great house which still maintained the worship of serene though conquered deities, three generations had watched the advent of new things. In the first it might have seemed that the quarrel lay even, and that this Oriental influence (which so many thought a dawn, but a few, and those among the greatest, the complete decline of human things) would retreat before the steadfast influence of the Roman forehead and of Roman eyes. In the second generation it was apparent that a great weariness had overcome the resistance of all who still clung to the institutions of a thousand years: they were at argument, or smiling upon those around, or abandoning all things in the common life except the theatre and the market, or more commonly leaning to the official thing and accepting the relief of speaking a common tongue in a common worship with the peasantry and the lords around. But still this household stood apart, though now its lord of the third generation, already old, saw very well that the Galilean had conquered.

He sat with his nephew, to whom caprice had

given a barbarian name—for such were fashionable with the women and often given to their little sons—he sat with his nephew, a young soldier, at evening under his colonnade and watched the landscape for the approach of strangers. The slaves of the vineyards were filing in from the fields, laughing together, some saluting as they passed; the domestic slaves had begun the business of the night; the lamps were trimming, and from within, where one of the small kitchens was, could be heard the blowing of charcoal fires. And as the sky darkened and the first stars just showed, a group of horsemen were seen far off along the Spanish road.

The nephew asked whether there were not some news as to their habit, whether the officials of the town were to meet them, and what rule should be given as to the prayers and songs when the feasting began. His uncle answered:

"The guests are not from the hills." He smiled gently. "They are of generous blood, from Gerona, and they will not marvel at anything worthy of a Roman house. If any of the company are disturbed they will be found among the retinue, and they can go and sing their hymns among the slaves." He still smiled as he added: "Nor will the officials say anything; and you, if you had

lived here and were not so recently from the Avernian Deserts, would feel no fear of the way in which the evening shall pass."

The guests arrived and the slaves took their horses. Upon the breasts of two men, one of whom had the boots and some of the accoutrements of a soldier, hung enamelled crosses. A third, with the low brow and quiet eyes of the rank that governed all that land, had round his dark young hair a very small circle of gold; he also betrayed religion as he greeted the noble who was to entertain him, for he gave him the salutation of Peace in the name of the Lord. They entered in together, and the old man, the master of the house, taller than the rest and even more leisurely in his gait than they, spoke of the Spanish road and of the vintage, of the news from the North, and of what changes had been ordered for the garrison along that shore.

When it was already dark over the sea, they reclined together and ate the feast, crowned with leaves in that old fashion which to several of the younger men seemed an affectation of antique things, but which all secretly enjoyed because such customs had about them, as had the rare statues and the mosaics and the very pattern of the lamps, a flavour of great established wealth and lineage. In great established wealth and

lineage lay all that was left of strength to those old gods which still stood gazing upon the change of the world.

The songs that were sung and the chaunted invocations had nothing in them but the memories of Rome; but the instruments and the dancers were tolerated by that one guest who should most have complained, and whose expression and apparel and gorgeous ornament and a certain security of station in his manner proved him the head of the Christian Priests from Helena. When the music had ceased and the night deepened, they talked all together as though the world had but one general opinion; they talked with great courtesy of common things. But from the slaves' quarters came the unmistakable sing-song of the Christian vineyard dance and hymn, which the labourers sang together with rhythmic beating of hands and customary cries, and through that din arose from time to time the loud bass of one especially chosen to respond. The master sent out word to them in secret to conduct their festival less noisily and with closed doors. Upon the couches round the table where the lords reclined together, more than one, especially among the younger men, looked anxiously at their host and at the Priest next to him, but they saw nothing in their expressions but a continued

courtesy; and the talk still moved upon things common to them all, and still avoided that deep dissension which it was now useless to raise because it would so soon be gone.

There came an hour when all but one ceased suddenly from wine; that one, who still continued to drink as he saw fit, was the host. He knew the reason of their abstention; he had heard the trumpet in the harbour that told the hour and proclaimed the fast and vigil, and he felt, as all did, that at last the figure and the presence of which none would speak—the figure and the presence of the Faith—had entered that room in spite of its dignity and its high reserve.

For some little time, now talking of those great poets who were a glory to them all, and whose verse was quite removed from these newer things, the old man still sipped his wine and looked round at the others whose fast had thus begun. He looked at them with an expression of severity in which there was some challenge, but which was far too disdainful to be insolent, and as he so looked the company gradually departed.

The Priest last rose. His host led him to the porch with ceremony, summoning all those domestics whose duty it was to stand present on all occasions of official honour; then he came back

and found his nephew alone. One lamp was permitted to remain, and by its light the old man questioned his sister's son, asking him whether it was by courtesy or by fear or for what reason that he also, at the sounding of the hour from the harbour trumpet, had put aside his cup.

The young man was embarrassed and he blushed. He swore that he had done nothing foolish, nor even gone to their ceremonies in public, and most emphatically did he assure the man from whom he was to inherit everything that he had touched none of their sacraments; but one must do as others did, and in the regiment it was not tolerable to break with universal custom. His uncle did not press him nor answer him at all; he nodded and he gently sighed; then he led the way to a niche where stood those rude family images, centuries and centuries old. Together they paid the accustomed worship, and then they also parted to sleep.

But the old man in the darkness of his little room, through the open arch of which came the slight noise of the sea against the wall below, lay sleepless many hours, his head upon his hand, remembering all that his great learning told him of the past and of the greatness of the past, and accepting, as men accept death, the end of all that had lent humanity to his world. Then, as drowsiness came upon him,

he murmured to himself the high verse which for now so many hundred years had comforted the Roman soul and given it dignity in the face of dissolution.

Next morning, with the first light of day, the Levanter rose. The sky was low and grey with hurrying clouds, and an angry sea burst and smoked against the walls of his room.

THE BARBARIANS

ABOUT 700 A.D.

In the latter part of the fifth century (towards 500 A.D.) the civilised parts of Western Europe were overrun by uncivilised or half-civilised tribes from beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire. Their numbers were not great, but the disturbance sufficed to upset the balance of social order and everything decayed. No part suffered more than Britain, when the savages from Scotland and uncouth pirates from the North Sea joined with half-subdued tribes in the province itself to pillage and ruin society. For over a hundred years the anarchy was such that Britain disappears from history. Some few of the great towns were not only sacked but actually destroyed, and among these appears to have been Anderida, a garrison and port upon the site of Pevensey in Sussex. In the second half of the sixth century (a hundred years later) there was something of a reaction after all this anarchy: the Roman armies reorganised Africa, and the Roman religion and civilisation re-entered Britain with St. Augustine. Some parts, however, were neglected, and none more than the Sussex seaboard, which did not get back the Mass and the Latin Order till a hundred years after Kent and London.

I here suppose a Greek from Constantinople or New Rome, which was then the seat of Empire and highly civilised, visiting Sussex just after the first feeble re-establishment of the Roman religion there. He goes down the Stane Street from London to Chichester, and then, with letters from the Bishop of Selsey, he goes along the sea-plain to the mouth of the Ouse, where he takes a boat round Beachy Head to Pevensey

THE BARBARIANS

ABOUT 700 A.D.

YOU know, Nicephorus, that there has existed in our family a great curiosity with regard to the letters of the Bishop, our ancestor, and even much reverence for them. For when he was appointed by the Divine Theodosius to the See of Anderida he perpetually sent his notes and his observations upon the farthest places of the West to those members of his family who preserved our archives; and in this he did but follow the example of the ancients, officers of the Palace, generals, and even bishops like himself, whose custom it was, as they changed their seat in the Roman obedience, to write upon the climate and the habits of the various provinces and tribes that they might meet.

This he did, and what he sent has been piously preserved; but its meaning is tenfold greater to me now that I have seen with my own eyes the places of which he wrote, their present condition, and the evidence both of the grandeur which he

enjoyed and of the destruction which he did not live to see.

You must know, then, that during the negotiations (with which I was entrusted) between the sacred Palace and the Bishop of Rome, I heard from some about the Court of the Western Patriarch, that one of those Missions in which he too busily interests himself with the Provinces of the West was about to start for Britain, and though (I tell you privately) such assumption of authority was odious to me, yet I was certain that the voyage proposed would be at once useful for my own information and for that of the Divine Emperor, who is ceaseless in his vigilance over even the most remote districts of the world. Nor did my consent to accompany the Roman clergy and officials give offence, as I am told, to the Sacred Palace itself, though it may have roused the cackling of some of those tongues that are always ready to defame an absent man; but my return will establish both the motive of my journey and the value of the step I have taken.

I proceeded, therefore, in such company through the Province and through the Gauls, hearing the settlement of various disputes and observing the manners both of the Romans and of the Barbarians, until I came to that Bononia from which the

Divine Cæsar, though yet a Pagan, had first sailed for the Island of Britain, and I was indeed curious to learn as I approached the white coast what I should find in this place, where it was said that all arts were lost, and whence certainly but little news has come to us for now two hundred years.

Those who accompanied us upon the boats, or rather some of them, were already familiar with Britain, but so doubtful is the learning of the West that they could not understand the eagerness with which I was approaching the ruins of this province.

I will not delay you with any long description of the halts we made at Canterbury and Rochester and London, where are three new bishoprics, of three cities all barbaric, but the last indeed the least barbaric of the three, for in London one might still believe, by certain of the statues and buildings round one, and by the appearance of commerce in the great river, that the better time had returned. Nor will I weary you with any description whatever of the Latin rites, of the use of Icons (even in the smallest chapels) and of the certitude all these people are in upon matters which we of New Rome know to be over-full of dispute, but I will at once proceed to tell you how I went south to visit those shores with which the name of our family is con-

nected. There are several excellent roads of a military sort from London to the nearest shores of the sea, and one especially which one would swear had borne soldiers but yesterday, so perfect does it still remain, though the damp climate of these provinces (which lie under the shade of the northern night and are at the very limit of the world) has covered them with moss and lichen. The embankment is very perfect, and even in the marshy crossings of the rivers there has been no destruction of the way worse than what may be seen in the less fortunate parts of Italy itself. So in but two days I reached the town of Regnum with letters provided for me from Rome to the Bishop of that place.

As to the shape of this last it may be briefly told. Its walls still surround it and the Palace yet stands though in places blackened by fire. Some also of the smaller houses preserve the order with which we are familiar, but it would make you laugh to see who inhabit such great relics and weep to observe how much within the walls, especially near the Eastern Gate, has crumbled into decay; for often where an altar or a temple or a portico once stood there are nothing but hummocks of ground with coarse grass and stagnant pools, and here and there a fragment of a pillar or a cut stone, or, what is still more ridiculous in appearance, a

rude hut piled up of what was once the masonry of a rich house; nay, I have seen Greek work and statuary mortared in between rough rubble by these barbarians and the body of Athene lying crosswise as a lintel for the cabin of one of these dogs.

The people in the town speak all a welter of barbaric dialects; there is not a word of Greek in the place; and as for Latin, you hear it only in degraded words among the populace: never fully spoken save by clerics or in the rites of the altar, or again in a sort of incomprehensible sing-song when some officer of the barbarians is compelled to read a deed or to plead in a priest's court—for in these rude places it is neither a dishonour nor perhaps a bad thing that the very priests have jurisdiction.

Well, then, I proceeded some few miles to see the Bishop himself, for it is another of their uncouth tricks that they will put the Bishop's residence in an outlying village neighbouring the town. This man received me kindly and even with honour, respecting the name of the Divine Emperor and the glory of the city. He is unmarried and professes that a priest is by nature a sort of monk, so that none of his Order should be wedded or even espoused, though on this there is, I know, a dispute throughout the provinces of the West; moreover

he would admit a widower. I desired of him an escort (since I knew him more capable of giving it than would be the kinglet of these half-human savages), saying that it was my intention to visit Anderida, of which our ancestor had been the Bishop. In this statement he showed a lively interest, promised all aid, and asked me by which way I would go; for there are three ways, either along the plain of the coast, or again along a deserted range of hills which runs all through that country, or again, inland, to the north of these lines along the fringe of a forest. It would be difficult to say which gave the greater inconvenience or danger, but I decided, upon his advice, to follow the plain until the last harbour, and thence to run some thirty stadia by sea till I should reach Anderida. This I did, going through the most extraordinary sights imaginable; for here was a vast and fertile plain, not incomparable to some that lie between the mountains and the Ægean Sea, yet not a vine-stock to be seen nor hardly a well-built wall. Here and there was a rough field of rye and still more rarely wheat, though that ill-cultivated and grassy. The road we followed had not been maintained (for it had never been of military use) and was the most shameful hotchpotch of good, hard, ancient work, of ruts, and in places of nothing

at all, and the chief danger was at the crossing of the rivers. All the old bridges have long ago broken down, and through one of the rivers, as though it were a matter of course, our escort fought its way against the wretched peasants of the further bank. These claimed some sort of toll or custom, which certainly we would not pay them; and to refuse payment my escort gave a very extraordinary reason, not that we were human beings, but that we were "Bishop's men." I tell you the things as they happened, even those which will be incomprehensible to you. We came, then, after three or four days to the harbour, where again we claimed a ship by right of some divinity which is here supposed to inhabit the clergy (as though they were Prefects, or of the Sacred Palace), and in the ship, after two hours sailing past a high head of white earth, we rounded into the harbour of Anderida.

If what I had hitherto seen was desolation, here was something far worse. For the site of the town, lying as it does between the sea and a great dark wood, of vast extent, has afforded but little opportunity to the barbarians, and the place, once sacked, was abandoned. You have seen one or two cities, perhaps, which have suffered from a fire, and you will remember from the archives of

our family that letter which our mother's grandfather wrote when he was marching with Belisarius, describing to us Timagaudi of the Nomads, where it stood deserted on the edge of the desert. A mixture of these two was all of what had been Anderida. The strong city walls of stone and brick still stand, but within them is nothing but a mass of house-walls all charred by fire. Few of these ruins exceed the height of a man; all the columns save one (both those of the Colonnade along the Harbour and those of the Basilica) lie prone. This one which still stands was a supporter of the Temple of Jove. It is of a foreign stone, carved in the manner of an early time, and appears, I must say, like a thing unnatural in the midst of this desolation. The votive tablets have not been touched by the barbarians, but all unconsecrated metal has been stolen long ago, saving the strong iron mooring-rings along the quay. There is not a sign in the place of human beings or of oxen; one does not hear the falling of water, and I found nothing more full of silence in this silent place than a fountain made, as is customary, in the shape of a dolphin, but pouring forth no water, for it was choked up with earth and dry. Overhead the plovers, which are innumerable in the marshes behind the harbour, continually

scream. The shaggy natives, who in all this district number, perhaps, but thirty households between the great wood and the sea (though I am told that in the wood there are burners of charcoal and even a few rough workers of iron), have a dread of the ruins, in which, as they maintain, are often seen apparitions and demons. They have built their huts outside the western wall, and have had the place consecrated, I know not how often, by the priests, who are here, as everywhere upon this coast, superstitiously revered. These savages came about in a group, not daring to enter the city, but standing at the gate and gazing at my dress, especially at the silken parts, with a kind of stupid awe like children. Some of them spoke, I am told, in the Celtic and some in the Teutonic method, but I had neither the patience nor the ability to distinguish these jargons. Their movements were slow, their bodies ill-fed, and the expression of their eyes was very unintelligent, also they had a habit of sitting at nightfall round a sort of central fire crooning dolefully in their hamlet, which was very disagreeable to us in our tents.

After two days of this (and they were long enough) more than one of our escort complained of fever; and as I know such deserted places to be particularly dangerous in that regard, I determined

to embark, chartering, for what seemed to the owner a fortune, a small boat—the largest of some half-dozen which stood beached in spite of the excellent harbour near by.

The barbarian in his ignorance and timidity was for running along the coast until he could see Gaul; but I would have nothing of this, and bade him steer boldly across, which he did, and we made the mouth of the principal river of Gaul, and so passed through regions declined indeed but acquainted with wine and with the order of the Sacred Palace and possessed of passable roads, until we had come right down to Massilia, where again (though it will seem to you to be a sort of end of the world) it seemed to me home; hearing, accent or no accent, the Greek tongue and finding men of a human kind.

Thence I send you these, with greetings to Theodora, to Justin, and to the rest, and I shall be with you, if the All Holy the Mother of God is favourable, but a week or so after you shall have read this letter.

RONCESVALLES

AUGUST 15, 778 A.D.

The Mohammedans having conquered Spain, Charlemagne, the greatest member of the greatest of Christian families, could do no more than contain them by holding the Valley of the Ebro, as upon another frontier he controlled the enemies of Europe by holding the Valley of the Elbe.

Returning to Gaul by way of the Roman road and pass (the Imus Pyrenæus) from a campaign in the Spanish March, his rear-guard under Roland was overwhelmed by the mountaineers in the midst of the Pyrenees. This disaster gave rise to the noblest of Christian epics

RONCESVALLES

AUGUST 15, 778 A.D.

THE Army had come three days over the ridges of the little hills, each higher than the last, following the great Roman road that led westward to Pampeluna. All the main body had passed long before from its repulse on the Ebro, and this, the rear guard, was perhaps three miles in length, not more; it was heavily impeded with waggons; some few of the richer men that had fallen sick were carried in litters, and though the way was still hard and good, centuries of usage had weakened it, especially at the base of each ascent, and there were places where it failed altogether, sunk into a marsh or crossing an *arroyo* where the spring freshets of three hundred years had broken the bridge and swept away the Talus.

At such places there was always an infinity of trouble—carts held back by hand, horses straining to prevent the rush of the weight behind them, confused noises and arguments and blows. So they went slowly on. They were heavily laden

with the spoils of cities, with the loot of the enemies of the Faith, and with that heavy armament which was so ill suited to the South. For very many were covered to the knees with strong leather coats on which great rings of metal interlaced made a complete web, and others had scales of iron overlapping as the scales of a fish overlap. And all the mounted men carried, slung to their saddles beside incongruous bundles of booty, their little steel caps and their great battle-axes, and some of the highest rank were further encumbered with a mighty elephant's tusk curiously carved, which they could wind like a horn to summon their followers.

It was perhaps midday when they came upon a vast open plain sloping gently towards the sun, and here the road they had been following came in at right-angles upon another and a larger road; the main road from Burgos and the south. This was the road that went straight across the Imus Pyrenæus, the pass into Gaul; it was the road which, with its brother road, the Summus Pyrenæus, four marches to the east, formed the sole gates of the Pyrenees. They halted for the midday meal, but they did not halt for long. It was their business to press forward out of this hard Iberian land. The light cavalry of the Emirs hung all round, white flashes of riding men well out of bow-

shot on their little desert horses, with here and there the blazing red cloak of a Sheik or the shining of a steel-linked coat among them. The leaders of the Christians knew that by one accident and another since they had ridden out of the gate of Pampeluna the rate of marching had been hindered, and that the main body was now far ahead, over on the French side of the pass. The gap between this rear-guard and the bulk of the Emperor's forces was too wide for safety, and, though they had marched under such a sun for so long, they were ordered, in spite of grumbling and some short mutinies, to press straight on.

The plain through which they hurried northward sloped, as I say, slightly to the sun. It was like a glacis, the rampart of which was the interminable line of precipitous white cliffs which marked the crest of the Pyrenees. These cliffs were of lime-stone ; the sun shone on them full, and above them the sky was intensely blue. For miles and miles away to the right they stretched interminably until they were lost in the perspective as one loses a wall of great length standing straight along a level. Just before the army, in the few miles between it and the range, a noble great wood of beech and of oaks spread as though it had been poured out in a flood over the sloping landscape. Above these

trees again a little grassy col made a notch upon the skyline a little lower than the white mountain cliffs on either side. This col was Roncesvalles; and across the green of it could most clearly be seen climbing up under the sunlight the ribbon of the road.

The villages through which they passed were deserted (for the Basques were almost as much their enemies as the Mohammedans were); they had for food and for drink nothing but what they carried; they were exhausted when the last ascent began. It was very soon surmounted; it was but a few hundred feet of easy meadow and the climb was the easier because the troops could here deploy, the column was shortened, and the dust which added so much to their weariness was laid. It was cooler for the height, and the sun, now in full afternoon, was mellower and less dangerous. A chapel which the Basques would use stood on the height before them, and when they reached the easy open saddle, the leaders saw one of those sights whose sudden vision stimulates the legends of history and is part of the glorious adventures attached to the records of armies.

Here was a prodigious cleft running dead north, thousands of feet sunk sheer into the earth, and slowly widening its sides to where, far away at the

opening of it in the misty disance, in the V-shaped mouth of the hills, like a calm sea in misty weather, lay the Gascon plains. They were out of the hard Iberian land, they were in sight of home; thick forests clothed the sides of the ravine and the pleasant sound of water in its depths greeted their return to Gaul; the keener eyed among them descried, or imagined that they descried, upon the very distant landscape, the winding line of the main army that followed Charlemagne. It was but a few miles on to the Castle of St. John, the first fortified and secure stronghold of Christendom, which would receive them after the adventure of the raid into the lost land and the dominion of Mahound.

Roland of the Marches, who had with him two companions and a little squad of servants, had ridden rapidly before the rest, partly to grasp in one view the nature of the road upon the downward side, partly—for he was of an affectionate and dreaming kind—to see, the first of all the army he commanded, the fields of kinsmen again and Christian land. They saw him upon his heavy horse against the sky as they climbed the pass behind him. He watched the valley in silence.

In that profound ravine there was no noise at all except the running of the torrent in the forest

below. The walls were very steep, so steep that in places the beech-trees had lost their hold and had fallen down the precipitous earth; and perilously along the front of that slope went the road. Roland could see it clearly, first almost horizontal, feeling its way along the safest contour of the precipice; here and there still supported by the huge masonry work of Rome, then plunging steeply in zigzags to the foot of the gulf, where it was lost beneath the trees. There, on the floor of the defile, perhaps three miles of marching below him, it passed through a narrow place, where steep rocks held it in on either side. No men showed upon the mountains; there was no movement at all. For a moment the commander wondered whether a flanking party ought not to be sent along the ridge to secure the main body from any attempt; in another moment he had seen that the plan would fail. As the valley deepened all communication between the ridge and the road became more difficult until, in but a few hundred yards, it became impracticable altogether, even for a handful of unarmed men. He was determined to risk the road.

He wheeled his horse round upon that little eminence, he and his companions, and stayed there stock-still while the long train of men and

horses and wheels and the huge balistæ and the beasts of burden filed wearily by. He watched in silence without commands of haste or fear, but with an increasing anxiety, the declining of the sun over the plains of Navarre, as the force defiled ; then he came on behind them, from which post he could best observe on the falling mountain road the whole of his command.

He had not so ridden a mile when those lonely hills began to have an uneasy and a dreadful life ; it was all but evening, yet one could still clearly distinguish the boulders and the bushes upon the higher sweeps of grass and rock, and it seemed that first one bush and then another moved ; but there was no glint of steel, there were no cries, there was no sign of that white signal of danger which a scout may catch at almost any range—the face of a man. Nevertheless as the darkness gathered it was certain and more certain that the deep shadows were peopled, and that the forest itself into which the head of the column had now plunged was alive.

It was not yet quite night when suddenly a great boulder leapt from the limestone ridge far, far above the road, bounded down step upon step of the ravine wall, and as it thundered revealed, tiny in the distance of the upper air, a group of wild

men whose cries were now answered immediately on every side. The underwood awoke; fierce rushes from above and below broke the line at one point and another and another. The Chivalry in the rear, galloping and pressing through their own men, could do nothing to rescue, and behind them also the clansmen poured in. As the first stars came out above the gorge, a steady carnage had begun.

* * * * *

Long before the dawn the inhuman noise of that forest ebbed into silence and was done. The Basques slept by fires undisturbed, and every man of the great Gaulish host, their enemy, was dead. Then for days and days the gold and the steel, the weapons and the horses, the worked timber, and the ivory and the lovely gems—all the arts of Christendom—laboriously found way up tiny mountain paths into the secret places of the Pyrenees.

THE DANISH BOAT

ABOUT 780 A.D.

Hardly was Europe creeping back to civilisation when, in the eighth century, a furious assault upon it, far worse than any earlier attack, broke from every side. The Scandinavian and German Pagans, the Mohammedans and, later, roving bands of Mongols attempted to destroy it. The energy of the Gaulish and German ruling family which culminated in Charlemagne checked the disaster, but after Charlemagne's death it was renewed more fiercely than ever, and Europe was barely saved by the resistance of Alfred and the Count of Paris, more than a hundred years after the first attack.

The Faith was the particular object of this invasion of "Roman land," whether by Arabs and Moors, as in Spain, or by Scandinavian pirates, as in Britain. In what follows I presume one of the first raids—say about 780

THE DANISH BOAT

ABOUT 780 A.D.

FOR now three nights, three days and the morning of a fourth, they had gone easily over the long but broken seas under the wind called Eager, which blew from the north-east of the world, and had in it at once the vigour of the Arctic and the soul of the southern things which it was seeking.

Their boat was long, broad and shallow. It was shallower even than most of the boats that stood all winter long lined up in sheds above high-water mark upon the solemn shores of the Fjord: for so the New Builder chose to build ships, though against him there were in the tribe three opponents: the Priest who saw a curse in all outlandish things; the owner of the *Snake* who did not desire his ship to be surpassed; and the Elder who was gentle, and was evidently descended from the gods; he spoke in general for the village when he said that a very flat boat was a folly.

Nevertheless, Hraf, whom they called the Ugly

(because in youth he had been ugly), had his new ship built very broad in the beam and very shallow, though a trifle longer than any other ; and he had it so built because the New Builder desired it so, and he followed the New Builder for this reason, that the New Builder's father had been his father's slave.

They had found him so frozen in the forest upon the hills above the Fjord that he had forgotten his name and the place from which he came. They had brought him down to the hall and continually fed him, warmed him, and drunken him, until he was a man again, whereupon he became (most joyfully to himself and most naturally) the slave of those who had succoured him, and especially of their chief, Hraf Bold, the father of Hraf the Ugly. This frozen man, who had forgotten all things, was a great worker in wood, and having married without rites a lower woman of the place, had by her an only son, a child who grew to be called the New Builder, with whom Hraf the Ugly in his childhood played. Full of such memories and secured by the sacredness of his garth, which (as of a right was, to the son of a village-founder) had 30 ft. upon the water-side, he had built his ship freely, with sacrifice to what god he chose out of the ten gods, and upon what lines best pleased him ; and he had allowed

the lines to be made out by the New Builder, whom many hated and all admired. The New Builder's eyes had a slope to them, and there were those who said that he was of the blood of those little devils who lived beyond the high hills.

Now, the New Builder was new enough in all conscience, but his boat was wrong, and Hraf come to know it when in this first voyage she behaved so oddly in front of the wind. For she buried her bows and she yawed, and whenever a puff of wind caught her slantwise she pulled so abominably at the helm that two men had to be set to lean against it, and even so it kicked and struggled like a thing that was alive; so that whatever men were set in the watches one of these two, or both, perpetually cursed the New Builder who would set a ship upon the stocks but did not know how to model its frame.

Meanwhile all these days they ran before the north-east wind called Eager. There was no rain. By day small clouds drove hurriedly over the clean and sparkling sky; by night there were no clouds, but, quite unencumbered, a protecting multitude of stars: and the New Builder and Hraf, his master, sat covered astern.

Forward, under the half-deck, the slaves sat crouched, singing and making buffoonery for their

master. The wide thwarts were empty, since the wind was perpetually fair, and the oars were lashed together in pairs under the bulwarks. Upon either side the stays stood stiff; the pine mast, short as it was and stout, bent a little under the pressure of the gale, and from time to time as a stronger gust came upon them, though they were running free, the cordage sang.

The thirty men that were free did nothing all day long, but the meaner of them threw meat to the slaves, or, in sheer need for merriment, went forward and wrestled with them under the half-deck, and the slaves allowed the throw.

It was now the morning of the fourth day; the air was no milder than it had been at their launching, but a mist had begun to drift above the foam, and the yellow water was a sign to them that they had come near to Roman land. The shields were slung outboard; the arms were passed forward for cleaning, the slaves took on another temper, they ceased their jesting and they began to scour the metal to the accompaniment of harsh commands, and two men were called aft—the Seer and the Pilot. As the ship (which was called *Broad*) rolled excessively in the quiet water, each was bidden speak in turn in the fashion that ritual demanded.

The Seer, therefore, when he had looked down a

little in silence at the planking, balancing himself upon his legs to the roll of the vessel, chanted in a monotone that he saw men richly clothed and priests who served wealthy devils, vessels of silver and of gold, great stores of meat preserved, man hurrying for life and flames lighting up the evening sky. And then swaying more violently in the ecstasy which ritual also commanded, he thought to hear the voices of gods and of women riding upon horses in the upper air. All these things he said had been sent him by the wind and went hurrying with the wind towards the further shore.

To this incantation the freemen listened without interest.

The slaves ceased their labour and heard it with an absorbing fear. Hraf the Chief and the New Builder neither smiled nor listened. For now a generation past such ritual had grown empty, for it was repeated always in the same tone and with the same promises. But it was a solemn duty of theirs and of the Seer that the rite should be performed. Then the Seer drew back and lay among the wolf-skins and the Pilot took his place upon just that part of the planking which his predecessor had held; it was marked off by a large square of red painted upon the boards.

It was the Pilot's place not to speak, but to

There was no sound except the very little noise which a boat makes running dead before a failing wind, and now and then the slight clank of a fitting, jerking as she rolled. He cast again, and once again saw the mark hiss through the sea, and once again came aft, leaping and dodging like a cat, passing the line around the stays, but ending up this time amidships, feeling bottom. He went forward for the third time.

This time he stayed longer. The shoal was more and more apparent; the seas began to run across and tumbled; the freemen stood up in their places. The slaves forward peered up in curiosity above the half-deck. Hraf and the New Builder alone kept their places undisturbed as the rank of the one and the respect of the other for his Chief required that they should do. The two men at the long and sculptured helm began to look more anxious and to strain their ears for orders. In the midst of this attention there suddenly appeared, right before them, a shore less high than a house, windswept and full of tangled grasses, and inland they could see, just see, those tiles and that belfry of a Christian church which marked a Roman harbour. The Pilot cast again. The weight struck before the line came tautened, and the red mark was over water and dry.

The Pilot called out exultantly: "Mark deep"; and hardly had he done so when three men knowing the signal ran forward and lined up, the one clinging to the mast forward of the sail, where he could see the Pilot fully, the next just behind the mast where he could hear the words of his comrade, the third amidships to pass on the command to the helm.

For twenty minutes after that there was a series of shouted orders as the weight and the line showed shoal to the left or to the right:

"Left board hard!" "Right board all!"

"Right board hard!" "Right!" and "Hard over!" twice, as there came a sudden bend in the channel.

Then the tide took the *Broad*, the Peak, which had been dropped during this manœuvre, was hoisted again, the banks were clear, close and defined, the pace was rapid, the water calm. They reefed up the sail to see well under it, and all of them knew that they were at last in a Roman river.

They let go past them in disdain, as they swept up the stream, small hamlets from which men fled or from the shores of which the bolder aimed at them ineffectual arrows. At last, after miles of going so between the marshes, they saw before

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them a great group of square towers and roofs, and especially that cluster of churches which were for them the mark of plunder.

But already the weight came up muddy, and, even for the light draught of the *Broad*, the river had grown doubtful. The heavy stone which was their mooring (for they despised the Roman anchor) was slung overboard at the bows, and its cable was fastened to bitts. The down stream, already strong with inland water and with the slack of the tide, kept them steady. The slaves were landed; they cast up a mound and were set to watch.

The next day these few pirates demanded ransom of the outer monasteries of Norwich.

THE SAXON SCHOOL

THE SUMMER OF 1002

Winchester was the centre of Saxon England. Hyde, the great Abbey outside the gates, was to Winchester what Westminster was later to London. In what follows, a school in the neighbourhood and attached to the Abbey is imagined, just before the last Danish conquest and harrying of that valley

THE SAXON SCHOOL

THE SUMMER OF 1002

UP on Itchen, on a gravel bank that looked southward over the rapid clarity of the stream, stood a long hut, thatched.

It was made in this way: Young oaks and beeches had been split asunder lengthways, and trimmed a little at the sides, but roots had been left rough and large. The outer rounded sides, with the bark still on, had also been left untouched. The smooth split side made the inward wall, and the bark made the outward. It was as deep as a stable might be, but very low. A man, even without his helmet on, had to bow in order to pass under the lintel. In length it was perhaps 50 ft. There were but few windows in it, and those windows were not glazed. The thatch was old, patched and patched over again, with one quite new piece at the corner, where a travelling Welshman had thatched it, for the people of the place thatched ill, and indeed in every art they trusted to the foreigner from beyond the sea or from beyond the marshes.

This long, low hut was a school, but to what parish it belonged no one could ever have told you, for it belonged to several and custom was very confused: but in the main it belonged to, and was judged by, the Abbey of Hyde, where lay the bones of Alfred, and where there was chanting all day long. In the Stokes, both Worthy and Kingly, as also in Sutton, which was the Bishop's Farm, little children were taught after Mass whatever is necessary to a Christian man—as, the Four Last Things, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Twelve Gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Hail Mary, both in Latin and in a local rigmarole of which the populace were fond; the Pater Noster in Latin alone and the Creed by heart, with a little prize for whoever could say it quickest by Easter Day. Then also they were taught the alphabet and how to carve it upon wood, and they were taught the names of the months and the days in each, and what things the Patriarchs did (especially the miracles), and among these nothing more fully than the story of Adam and Eve and of the Flood.

These things were taught in the village churches after Mass on Sunday, but the school here on Itchen was of a different kind. To begin with, the site was sacred, the church of Itchen Stoke lay just to the east upon a sward, and between it and the

school was a circle of stones which heathens had raised to devils before our Lord came, and before St. Joseph had landed at the mouth of Avon and had built the Holy Hut at Glastonbury; a thorn from Glastonbury grew beside the door.

This school was for such as would learn more than was necessary to every Christian man. It was for such as desired to read Boethius and Virgil and all the Offices. It was also for those who would know history from the beginning of the world, and how to reckon large sums and small, and the names of strange beasts, and what countries there were throughout the world.

Twenty or thirty at the most of the boys and young men of the place came here on every day of the week, except on Feast Days, and a monk from Hyde taught them. It had so run for more than one hundred years since Alfred died. Any one that would learn might come from after Mass till the meal before noon, and that meal he should have free in recompense for his study, to which end the school was endowed and called after the name of Our Lady of Good Knowledge—*Bonæ Sapientiæ*—of whom an image, carved in oak by Gauls, stood above the roof, turning with the tail of the serpent, whom she crushed, by way of weathercock. The endowment of this school was a field worth twenty

shillings, which is an ox team, that is, twelve shillings to the school, five shillings to Winchester, and the other three shillings to the King—but always twelve shillings to the school, even in a bad harvest, though the rest should bide, and the King, when he wore his crown at Winchester, would commonly make largesse of the three shillings to the school at Pentecost, so that the scholars could be provided for without need of their work for hay or harvest.

Upon the day which was the Feast of Our Lady of Good Knowledge there was a holiday there, and an annual quarrel between the Father Tutor and the Priest of Stoke for the use of the church, and in this quarrel youths were often wounded and sometimes killed, and the Bishop of the city invariably decided for the parish. On such an occasion monks would come from Hyde, bearing some relic of Alfred, and would proudly bear it in procession around the school, to the intolerable exasperation of the priest.

The school, I say, had stood a hundred years and more; since Alfred and now Sweyn was near. It was summer. The harvest had just been stacked into the barns, and the boys were droning in their manner louder than the bees outside. The sun fell full upon Itchen, caught on its twenty million

little ripples, and the dancing light from that water shone reflected through the door in a moving pattern upon the walls and ceiling of the room. The Father Tutor had twice repeated in Latin the phrase of dismissal, when he called a young man up before his desk and said to him : " Now are you fit to be a clerk, and at Michaelmas you shall come from your father's forge to Hyde. But if you would come now, first show me what you know." When he had said this the young man waited a little, and then repeated in Latin the Psalm " In Exitu," and all the while the old man nodded his head contentedly, for no pupil of his had been so word-perfect since the child of the London woman had died in the green Christmas of five years before. Then the lad said, in their order, to the admiration of his companions, the major prayers, and answered rightly upon the Emperors of Rome and the feats that Virgil did in his brazen tower, and the descendants of Noah, one by one, till it was plain that there was no end to his learning.

The old man was ready to take him away, and they went together over the water meadow towards Hyde and the city, talking in the Latin tongue, and without one word in the vulgar, upon divine things, until they came to the gate of the Abbey, where the Brother Porter, who had been warned,

asked them, as ritual would have it, in the name of Alfred, "whom he brought there." The Tutor answered: "One who would be a priest." Then the porter said: "What will he do for his priesthood?" And the boy answered in reply: "I will forge in the Abbey forge." When he had said this they led him in, and they shut the gates behind him, as though to cut him off from the world.

THE NIGHT AFTER HASTINGS

On October 14, 1066, *a great body of men from all parts of Europe, a few of them Italian, many Breton, but most of them French, led by William the Duke of Normandy, who claimed Edward the Confessor's inheritance, defeated upon a hillside called "Hastings Plain" above the river Brede the less civilised supporters of Harold, who, under that provincial noble, had marched at full speed from Yorkshire to meet the invaders. The contest was not determined till very late in the day, and, while there was no regular pursuit, the cutting off of laggards and the attempt to prevent the information and reorganisation of the enemy could only be pursued after sunset.*

*

THE NIGHT AFTER HASTINGS

THE hermit in the wood beyond the Brede was very proud. He was not proud by nature—on the contrary, it was humility which had made him become a hermit, but a long acquaintance with mankind, with whom he favourably compared, and the increasing reverence of his neighbours had made him proud. He was proud because all the way from Dungeness to the Weald up to Crowborough Top he was the only Holy Man. There were, indeed, the parish priests, though but few even of these in the uplands, in the marsh parishes, and especially along the sea-shore, but they were of little account in his eyes, and of no very great account in those of their parishioners. Some were married over the left, some brazenly married and given to argument that such marriage was tolerable. All were drunken. He would wager that there was no man tonsured between Thames and the sea that could properly interpret the Creed: the Apostles' Creed, let alone the Nicene Creed. Nay, there were few that did not make a slip in the

spoken parts of the Mass, and when it came to singing it was deplorable. For his part it was his bounden duty to walk over into the valley of the Rother and hear Mass upon Sundays and upon certain Feasts, but he sat there in his little hut waiting for the day when good hermits should be the pattern of mankind, and he himself should be a priest as a priest should be. But he would not take orders ; not he ; he would have nothing to do with the accursed hand of Stigand. He had once walked to Canterbury. It had taken him two days and the sight he saw at the end of it was quite enough. He cursed all those who made lax the service of God, and when any man made mention of the Archbishop in his presence he spat upon the ground.

He sat thus lonely in his little hut, with an expectation which was at once vague and convincing that better things were at hand. The lords were decayed, the clergy were corrupt, ignorant and rare, the populace had no voice—even the keen and talkative men who worked about the charcoal smelting-forges were besotten in temperament and servile ; but better things were at hand. How they would come he could not tell. He thought, indeed, that the worst of the darkness had past, for there had been news, days and days past, of the

landing of yet another host of pirates; yet he waited with an interior faith for order, for a light spread over the land and for a dignified and fixed society.

He was just upon eighty years old. He had something of a memory—and, above all, a tradition—of better things, for his father had revered and followed Dunstan, and he himself had hung up against the wall of his hut a leaden image of that man whom he already called a saint. In Mayfield he had friends who thoroughly agreed with this contempt of his for the decline of the countryside, and who partially understood his clinging to a resurrection of it.

Filled thus with a large dream, very confused but very powerful, he sat that night and slowly drank his ale out of a large, round, wooden bowl which he held up to his mouth with both hands as he supped it. It was a good four hours after sundown and there was no kind of noise in the Vale of Brede. A damp and somewhat cold mist was over all the countryside, and every now and then one could hear the drip of the wet falling from the leaves of the trees.

To him thus melancholy there stumbled in through the opening of the hut (for it had no door) a wounded man.

This man was very tall in stature, not very broad-shouldered, strong in the muscles of the arms, and uncertain in his gait. His face was long and narrow, hair let to grow for weeks straggled over it, and it was as pale and dull as a wet leaf in autumn. The man had light blue eyes, not without fever. He staggered down, flopping upon the bench which ran by the side of the hut, and stared at the hermit for a good half-minute without speaking; the hermit, looking at him, saw that all his left arm was bandaged up in rough rags; they were dirty and saturated with blood.

The new-comer spoke in a weak tone and yet with violence, but what he said was quite unintelligible. From his accent he was certainly northern, perhaps a Northumbrian man, but it was stupid of him to speak his language in the south. The hermit spoke rapidly to him in Latin. It meant nothing to him. Then he spoke to him slowly in Latin, but the man only replied by a stupid glare. Then the hermit, in a careful and very chosen accent, recited what was best known as a common greeting between wanderers and himself, separating out each syllable.

"Fi-li mi quid quæ-ris?"

The stranger, who was already drooping with exhaustion, looked at him dully, and replied by

pulling out a loose tooth and letting his chin fall upon his chest. The hermit had not known that there were men this side of the sea who could not understand so simple a Latin phrase. There was no one in Sussex but could have answered it. That a Kentish man should not follow the speech of men from down the coast would be excusable enough, for the dialects of the coast varied, but that any human man should be quite dumb before the simplest conventional phrase of everyday Latin was a thing the hermit could not understand. He had heard that the pirates were like this, and there fell upon him that disgust and fear of the barbarian which, to men who love civilisation and order, is the disgust and fear of a reptile ; but his Christianity overcame. He let the wounded man lie down upon the bench, he covered him with a thick cloth, and he put under his head a heap of straw. The wounded man lay there and stared, still quite stupidly, now at the burning tow in the tallow-bowl, now at the darkness outside the doorway. As he lay, he muttered continually between his swollen lips and with his wounded and broken mouth words of the north country ; that Tostig was a great lord ; that Harold was a great lord ; that he knew not which was lord of his lord ; that lords should not force poor men to fight ; that he

had come through many lands and hated them all; that he hated most this land in which a plain man was asked to fight against horses, and was hit about the head with iron, and in which not even the men of the place would speak a Christian tongue, but only sorcery. So far as any emotion remained in him, it was a fear that the hermit would bewitch him. He had distinctly heard him use the language of incantation.

Meanwhile the hermit understood nothing of all this, but was still bewildered, wondering who on earth this man could be, and deciding at last that he must be one of those pirates who had so recently landed, and of whom he had heard that they were not ten miles away, and whose battle it was which had made a distant clamour over the brow of the hill that very afternoon.

The old man sat there quite silent, and bit by bit his wounded guest muttered less and less audibly, and was at last silent also.

It was now near midnight when the hermit heard outside the noise of horse-hoofs soughing in the wet clay of the woodland. He had more visitors. There came in two men very different from anything he had met before. The one was still covered in a coat of fine-linked mail, with a leather girdle and hanging from it a very large

sword. His head was uncovered and round, the hair cropped close, the face clean shaven, with a square jaw and vigorous deep brown eyes. The other was dressed in fine cloth, his gloves had fur upon them, and he carried himself like a man who was always dainty and unwilling to undergo fatigue. In these men there was no hesitation. The first of them (who was in armour) spoke at once in the Church Latin with much such an accent as the hermit had heard on the lips of monks from Devonshire, with whistling " u's " and broad " a's " but with a foreign thinness. He asked whether any man had taken refuge in the hut. Then his eye fell upon the figure which lay quite still upon the bench. That companion of his who was not in armour spoke in a sort of soft and musical southern Latin which the hermit could still just follow, and repeated the question of his companion. The hermit answered :

" My lords, you are great lords. I know nothing of this man, except that I have given him charity."

The new-comers were soldiers, and true soldiers had never yet been in the island. Their reticence, their decision, their immediate actions were appalling to the hermit. The short man in armour beckoned sharply towards the outer darkness. He was at once obeyed. Two serving-men, short

also, bullet-headed also, stamped with the same stamp as their lord, came in at once, leading between them a tall, fair, lumbering man who was closely bound. They bade him speak to the wounded figure on the bench and interpret for them. The prisoner did not disobey, but quite willingly spoke in that northern dialect of his a few incomprehensible words, and then shook his head. The hermit did not understand the words, but he half understood the gesture. He leant over the bench, and making the sign of the Cross upon himself and afterwards in the air above the head of the wounded man, he said to them in Latin: "He is dead."

The Norman knight and his Italian companion stood somewhat relaxed at the news, but not unpleased, as if a long quest, to which they had been ordered and which they had themselves thought useless, was now ended. They left with the hermit two of their serving-men and money for the burial and for one Mass only. The money was of a sort the hermit had not seen before.

These lords then rode out into the night with their followers, making for their camp, and next morning the hermit hired with the money given him six woodland men, who bore the Northumbrian upon a litter, and he was buried in the churchyard over the hill by the Rother, and one Mass was said for his soul.

RUNNYMEDE

JUNE 15, 1215

On June 15, 1215, *the League of Officials, wealthy merchants, higher clergy and Barons met the King, John (against whom they had risen after his defeat abroad), on the far side of Thames, opposite Staines, having marched that morning from London. He there assented to a Great Charter confirming their privileges, which they had drawn up for him to sign. John, after signing, took the field, hammered the rebels, and would, but for an untimely death, have easily recovered the rights of the central government against the aristocracy*

RUNNYMEDE

JUNE 15, 1215

THERE is an unmistakable noise of cavalry upon the march which is not very unlike the noise of the sea when it breaks gently against a shingle beach the day after a storm.

This noise was heard a long way off down the straight Roman Road.

The village of Staines had long expected to hear that noise, for orders had gone on before to make things ready for a crossing. It was near the longest day of the year, and within a fortnight of St. John's Eve, that the news came to them, and they had made ready for now two days ; for the host, rather wealthy than large, but still considerable, would have found no sustenance in the place if provision had not been made. The summer had been early and there was already hay from the Abbey mead at Chertsey. It was bought at a high price, but was likely to be sold at a higher still. Oats had come down the river, though at Windsor there had been strict orders not to sell ; the chandlers had gone

further afield to the Middle Hythe, and had had, a few of them, the best of luck in Cookham market unknown to the King; for the King was secretly forbidding market.

The people of Staines, being for the most part poor people, had made a story of the quarrel between the King and the rich men, and (being poor people) had taken sides and made a sort of game of it. Further away, in Bedford or at Oxford, the thing had become a sort of legend, and men went together in masses for their lord or for the King; many more went by the priest, and took sides according to his leaning—for the priest was often a good man—but this was in the remoter villages.

Further still, no noise of the quarrel had come, but only the plain knowledge of it, and a vague interest at that: "Let them fight it out! There have been many wars! Wars are good things."

Right away at the ends of the country, in the Counties Palatine, upon the Marches and on the westward slope of Devon, the minds of men were made up; the heart of the kingdom was in trouble as usual, but they were healthy and secure and they despised all this Frenchified turmoil. Only right up north could you have found partisans; there, indeed, so many lords, great and small, agreed

together and had for so long agreed, had so filled their benefices and were so supported by the great isolated monasteries of their countrysides that all the world went together and was determined that John was a wicked man and there was an end of it. Yorkshire was a sort of separate country on the matter, and for a little the three Ridings would have risen and marched south together.

Not so the village of Staines. London was the county town of Staines, and Staines vaguely despised London—a place in which a poor man had no mind of his own. Staines, left to itself, would have naturally decided against those rich and offensive merchants who were always for rebellion at a price. But then Staines was in the shadow of Windsor. Hugh, the Frenchman, had been hit by a forester, and the forester had paid no guild. Bertram, called " of Brittany " (which place neither he nor his father had ever seen—but he was a swaggering fellow and loved a name !), may have been lying when he said that he fought with the giant who was porter at the Castle gate, but whether he was lying or not, he had most certainly been shut up for three days, and had only appeared at Mass upon Sunday with a growth of hair on his chin and a starved look which was intolerable to his fellow villains of Staines. Imprisonment was

universal butts, but they took the jokes good-naturedly, and one of them, whom a man in the crowd had punched a little too hard as he passed, said over his shoulder: "*Suadente diabolo!* . . . It is matter of excommunication! . . . I am of the wood of which Popes are made!"

To which the villain who had punched him answered: "Not with such knots in it!"

And the aged ritual joke provoked more laughter than if it had been new.

For close upon two hours they straggled by, if you count the heavy and broad-wheeled waggons that came after them, all piled with stuff and tent-poles, and here and there arms.

The horses were all stout, fresh and new, commandeered in London, for the horses of the forced march from Bedford had been sold for nothing to the knackers and the small men of London, and the Barons, especially the northern Barons (who took a special pride in horses), had seized all that was best in the capital, paying for it by promises upon the King, their enemy.

The host came to the bank of the river, and there they deployed. The grass was new and fresh, but they soon trampled it down; they stretched from the mouth of the Colne a mile and more down stream, and ready for them, like a little fleet,

were the ferry-boats from miles above and below.

The June morning was clear and brisk, but the air smelt of recent rain, and the river was running heavy over the weir. The old stones, which marked where, centuries before, a Roman bridge had stood, were covered by the flood, and showed like gleaming bosses under the rush of the river. Squared timber lay piled upon either bank, all oak from Windsor, but the new bridge was not yet begun. One hour after another the big ferry-boats took over horses and men. Only, of all that host, not a fifth passed the stream ; only the rich men and the more important of the clerks and the servants of either. All those whose rank entitled them to such an exhibition, and who were not already armed, put on their shirts of steel links and strapped on their heavy scabbarded swords before the crossing, and so crossed ready.

Upon the further shore was the wide stretch of turf called Runnymede.

At the far end of a mile or so of flat and mown grass the carpenters had put up a stage. There were short painted masts with forked pennants upon them, and a very gay tent, upon the drooping portal of which stood, as upon a banner, in flaming crimson against gold, the three leopards of Anjou,

and sitting under this, full in the sunlight that beat upon him from the east and south, sat a man who bore, concentrated in his gesture, though he was seated and had for the moment a royal repose about him, the energy of the Plantagenet. His sound, cropped, powerful head, thick neck, high shoulders and broad, his exquisite care in dress and the concealed contempt and anger of his eye, would have betrayed him even under a disguise for the King. As he sat there with all the circumstance of kingship about him, he could not be approached without awe. At his right stood, with the utmost ceremony and in the fullest accoutrement, the Archbishop, pretending an impartial service, behind whom was a retinue; upon his left, down the steps of the platform, were many who were not noble in blood but who had served him as soldiers in his wars, and who showed more than their master the anger that they felt against the wealthy rebels.

Towards this group advanced, in a deputation, some dozen of the greater men and two clerks. Far behind them, upon a table that they had found placed, was a parchment attended by a group of priests. The King seemed not to see it. But he fixed his gaze steadily and courteously upon the advancing group. He rose, in spite of his rank,

and went down the steps towards them with a sort of undulating walk which, for all his reputation and his known valour, was offensive to the men who watched him. He smiled; he seemed at ease—and he greeted his enemies as though the function were one of honour to himself and to them.

Then they knew, as did the crowd behind them, that the Charter would be signed. Guy of Clifton was very glad, for he knew that the weir over the Thames before his house would be lifted, and that he could make what revenue of fish he chose. And Godfrey of Poynings was gladder still, for he knew that his fine would be judged by the custom of the Rape of Bramber, and that no neighbour would dare to recover. All these great men and small in the feudal crowd were glad for one reason of money or another, and they saw that their demands were secure.

What they did not see was the flaming outburst of the soldier, the way that he would break his word to pieces in his anger as he had broken a sword upon the marble table in his anger at Rouen; they did not see the great raid to the north, the burning farms and the campaign of fury that all but restored kingship to England.

THE ARMIES BEFORE LEWES

MAY 13, 1264

John's son, King Henry III., a man of great piety, disturbed by yet another rebellion of his Barons and the wealthy of London, after certain successes came down to the Cinque Ports and so up over Cuckmere from the east to Lewes with his army in early May, 1264. *The Barons' army and their allies from London lay at Fletching, in the Weald of Sussex, to the north of Lewes and of the Downs, under the guidance of Simon de Montfort, a mystic, son of that great French noble who, a generation before, had destroyed the Albigensian Heretics. On May* 12, *this rebel army received the challenge of the King, and on the* 13*th it broke camp and approached the escarpment of the Downs, in order to reach Lewes, where the King's army lay*

THE ARMIES BEFORE LEWES

MAY 13, 1264

AS the Ides of May came near, the royal army, under a fresh morning, followed the narrow, sunken and tortuous road that led from Hurstmonceaux along the Vale of Glynde. At such an hour it might have been summer, so thick was the air with a pleasant mist, above which Firle, massive and bare, stood silent. New grass had changed every aspect of the valley, and the thickets, now in full leaf, hid with their beauty chance robbers of the Weald whom the noise of the march from Winchelsea and along the castles of the sea-coast had attracted out of their woods. Now they fell upon an exhausted straggler when the host had passed; now upon some waggon, stuck fast in the heavy clay, and miles behind the rear-guard. For it had rained all night with a warm rain, and the trampling of the horse along the straight lane had left a morass behind, difficult for the baggage-train.

The cuckoo was twice heard towards Alfristone, and from a spinney that fringed Mount Caburn

came the mockery of nightingales, when, not later than nine o'clock, the four trumpets and the banner (which was the banner of Britain, a dragon inherited from the Kings of Wessex and from their ancestors, the free and wild princes of the Devonian hills, of Cornwall, of the Usk, of Caerleon, and of Tintagel) topped the rise from which can be seen, not a mile away beyond the river, the height of Lewes.

The new stones of the wall shone white against the morning (for the sun perpetually showed between the clouds, which now had begun to scurry across the sky), and to the left, down the Valley of the Ouse, the marshes gleamed at high tide.

No one had made a muster of the host, but it was far smaller than the garrison had expected. Too many horses had been thrown away at Tonbridge, and there had been too much forcing of the pace in that great sweep of theirs round eastward by the Cinque Ports towards Lewes, the stronghold of the Guarrennes. They rode into the town.

There was no one in the town who could tell them how much or what the rebel army had done; but a shepherd from the Downs had brought news that a gipsy had given him, saying how a great host was already gathered in the Weald, and this was all they knew.

The Ides of May were approaching, but had not yet come, when they learnt that the enemy lay near. A herald came in with the letters of De Montfort, and to these the King replied.

Night fell, and there was no certainty in the garrison or upon the walls. Prince Edward sat right into the night with Luzignan, drinking wine and filling his youth with the imagination of the fight that was at hand.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, in the Weald, to the north of Lewes Gap, on the clay of the Weald and in the oak-trees of it, the determined, fanatical and motley army, not an army of chivalry but of the rebellion, watched all night and prayed to God.

They made their confessions to the numerous priests, many of them wandering priests who followed the army; they knelt by torches and received the absolution of the Bishop who had joined the host; few slept—and with this singular, unmilitary preparation the "Army of the Cause of Heaven" braced themselves through the darkness to meet the adventure and the strain of the morrow. There were many men there paid to come, many who had come from calculation, but many more from enthusiasm; there were squires of the north, to whom the dialects of middle England

and of the south were even more unfamiliar than the French which they stammered now and then in the attempt to show that they were gentlemen. There were a great mass of Londoners, thousands upon thousands, held in a loose discipline by their wealthier fellow citizens; there were peasants drawn from every county between Trent and Thames; and apart, governing all, were the Barons, contemptuous of any tongue but their own, and exchanging but rarely as they moved in the crowd at night those phrases which, six miles away in Lewes, men also of their rank were exchanging: the pure northern French of civilisation and of the Crusades. But the man who gave them all one soul, and in whose mystical and exaggerated mind their confused aspirations took form and lived, De Montfort, was not seen until the day began to dawn.

When the day dawned upon those Ides of May, and the thatched roofs of Fletching could be distinguished by the armed men camping in the village streets, the keen air was bitter with the bitterness that belongs to these underparts of the Weald. A white frost lay over the sodden meadow, and it still showed white under the beginnings of the day, which still struggled against the slanting rays of the moon; for the moon had not yet set, though

every moment she became paler and paler above Ditchling and the Downs to the west. In that mixed light the leader appeared and rode amongst them.

He was the first to be mounted, and all the hour of ordering was his own work amongst the many thousands. He was armoured, in spite of the length of the march before him: he trusted none but himself; two men from the Perigord, his squires, rode behind him, but dared not speak. He gave separate and personal commands to the heads of the loose companies. Now and then, as must always be the fashion of great commanders, he turned abruptly to rate some common man whom he saw ill-accoutred. The common man would tremble, but could only partly understand, for he had but a partial community of tongue with this great lord.

De Montfort went slowly along the whole length of that two miles of men before he allowed a saddled horse to go forward or a company to turn and form. He was careful to distinguish that the white cross was sewn upon breast and shoulder; he found one man staggering under what was left in him of the night's beer, and had him sent back to the baggage-train. He struck another that had ventured out of the rough line. He sat erect and firm, though

he had not yet eaten (for he had communicated but the moment before taking horse); only an occasional shifting of his foot in the stirrup betrayed the weakness of his broken leg, now healed.

Though the sun had not yet risen, it was broad day, and the trees were full of birds, when at last he had surveyed the whole, given command, and permitted the head of the column to move. He kept in one place, facing the host as it filed past, impressing, as it were, physically upon the multitude the hard face, the pale eye, the spare and disciplined figure of the fanatic. When the last of the column had passed he glanced back at his waggons, saw them massed, and left them standing on the village green, then, and only when a picked company for a rear-guard had gone by and left him alone with his two squires of the Perigord, did he bless himself with his right hand and canter up the line.

Twice he let his horse fall to a walk; the first time as he passed the slingers, whose exactitude and vigour were his pride—as he saw them his own rigid face half smiled, the mouth at least, but not the eyes; the second time, when, after he had overtaken the interminable and straggling rank of the Londoners, he came up level with the mounted knights who were their leaders, and spoke to Segrave, for Segrave knew the dialect of the town

and could report upon the spirit of that contingent which he commanded, and he said that though they looked unsoldierly (for they were fat burgesses, apprentices and lounging riverside men) he would go bail for their spirit when it came to action. De Montfort answered neither yes nor no, but he cantered on up the line, till he came at its head to the wicker carriage closed in with a wicker roof and shut with a wicker door that had borne him while his leg was healing. This thing his intense, feverish and superstitious mind had endowed with a sort of sanctity. Herein he kept bound four prisoners of his, rich men of London who had refused to follow his command; and alongside of it was lashed an enormous long fir-pole, and in a bundle beside it the Banner of the Cross and of Almighty God, which he purposed to set up before battle upon the very height of the Downs.

These stood dark, solemn, and, as it were, appealing, a little way before him; not a barrier, but rather a pompous ascent provided for him and a platform for glorious occasion. He went on, silent, ahead of the army, gazing at the challenge, or rather the invitation of those great hills of grass that were surely created for a good cavalry captain to use, and with every slow length of his approach towards them, that inspired and prophetic con-

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fidence of success which inflamed Simon De Montfort with enthusiasm whether before victory or defeat, swelled his spirit.

It was in this mood that he crossed the sunken road that has fringed the foot of the range since men first began to wander over Sussex land, and in this mood that he reined in his horse again and drew it somewhat aside in order that he might watch his great command begin the collar work of breasting the steep slope of the Combe.

What order he made, with what a vision he filled his four battalions, what fate they had, and how the action was decided I shall next describe.

THE BATTLE OF LEWES

MAY 14, 1264

On May 14, 1264, *Simon de Montfort, his rebel Barons and their allies from London, though losing the left of their battle in the Downs above Lewes, were successful upon their right and so gained the day, taking prisoner the King himself. In this way the nobles and the wealthy of London, who had already partially succeeded against John and had obtained from him the signing of Magna Charta, laid a foundation for what was much later to become the aristocratic constitution of England*

THE BATTLE OF LEWES

MAY 14, 1264

THE windows of the Castle of Lewes look south and east over the town, north and west over that broad upland plain which stretches on to a rounded summit and is called Mount Harry.

At one of these Prince Edward stood with the Luzignan. Soldiers in command are either occupied beyond all bearing or quite at leisure, and these two had been at leisure for some hours. They had heard Mass at dawn in the dark chapel; they had wandered together into the courtyard, and had thought of riding into the open. Their rank forbade what each of them desired, which was to spend an empty day in and out of the narrow streets of the town, listening to the people.

It was still early morning, but some hours had passed since that summer daybreak as these two leaned at the very deep, rounded window and gazed beyond the shadow of the Castle at the large sward rising to the west and north.

Here the best mounts of the lords were grazing,

and their valets stood by with each upon a *longe*, seeing that none should escape; they were heavy horses, large, short legs, big barrels, and nothing lively about them but the eye, for they were used to war. As the princes so looked, awaiting one more day of foolish leisure, they saw long, thin lines of lifted spears rising like a wood of winter larches over the summit of Mount Harry; three moving lines of men, spread over a mile of ground, jerked over the crest of the hill. Their movement was not rapid, but it was regular. They were distant much more than a mile, and yet, showing thus against the sky-line and separated by the clearly defined gaps between the three batailles, they had about them both order and menace.

At once the Castle awoke. The princes, as they heard the clamour, saw from their window the valets catching at the horses' manes, vaulting on to their broad backs, and galloping heavily, but with all the speed they could, towards the narrow port-way upon the wall. It was like a race (for only one could pass through that gate at a time). They clustered outside of it and then filed in as quickly as they could, each couple jostling for precedence at the edge of the drawbridge.

The first thing in the minds of the princes was a wonder about the scouts, but these had deserted

their posts far up upon the Downs, and one man only, who had been left to give warning to the guard, had been caught and silenced by the enemy when they had found him shivering under his gorse-bush at dawn on the edge of the Combe. The second thought, since they were soldiers, was this—that a rapid advance might pen them within the town. That advance was never made. The army of Simon de Montfort had not a sufficient discipline for rapidity; its *morale* demanded prayers and omens as a matter of calculation; not only for the army but for Simon de Montfort's temperament also prayers and omens were a matter of course, and that long line halted up there upon the hill-top above the town kneeling and watching a quaint ceremony of knighthood before they slowly went to their positions.

When, therefore, Prince Edward, the first of his command, had ridden out, equipped, through the drawbridge, the line of the enemy was still so far that you could not see the face of a man nor distinguish anything except the mounted from the unmounted men, and, fringing each division but much heavier upon the left than the right, the parallel poles of the spears.

Prince Edward rode out, and with him the Luzignan. A very long file of cavalry followed; the

infantry of his command he neglected, depending entirely upon the charge. The enemy gave him full time to deploy; the horses stood in rank, and shield after coloured shield made a pattern all along the line of the wall. Prince Edward looked to the left and saw, far away, down towards the Priory, men issuing as had his command, and deploying as his command had done. They were his father's men, and his uncle of Allemaigne's; they also formed two great, dense lines of cavalry, so that at last three bodies, strung the whole length of the western wall of Lewes, awaited the advance of the Barons. For this formation the enemy, yet halting, gave them ample time. Behind the three groups of the enemy, a fourth, many of its units dismounted and all in repose, stood as a kind of reserve.

If it had been intended to await battle in this position, and to let the royal army charge uphill against an orderly defence, the plan was broken by the rebel army's left, which stood over against Prince Edward and the Castle force. These were the Londoners, and while they thus stood opposite the best of the royal cavalry, they themselves counted but few knights, and these rode, few and somewhat uncertain, at the head of a great mass of foot-soldiers, fifteen thousand or more; the knights

attempted to establish a regularity of formation for which civilians, such as their followers were, had no aptitude or training. But though the Londoners had neither, they had zeal, which is the mother of disaster, and as they moved under that morning—the first movement in the long hesitation before the shock—it was difficult to say whether the untutored mass overwhelmed its mounted captains or whether these were leading it; the horses at first shambled heavily; the infantry behind were at a slow trot. For their lack of order the footmen made up by cries.

As this strange initiative proceeded, the opposing forces on the left still maintained an exact discipline and stood at arms, but the gathering rush of the Londoners proceeded. Prince Edward's line of armoured knights, which stood to receive it, did not move. The unwieldy mass gained impetus, accelerated its movement, the leading horses broke into a canter, into a gallop, their riders bent forward, behind them the 15,000 began to straggle out in a sort of wedge where the faster outran the less fast, and then, when perhaps two longbow shots separated Prince Edward from the apex of that noisy stream, he bent forward, looked along the line, and gave a cry which every one who had fought beneath Rochester knew.

There is a way in which a horse springs forward to the spur from immobility; in this way not one but several thousand sprang together. The line of cavalry swept in a crescent like a scimitar over the short grass, belly to ground, every man's sword held out low down to the right of his mount, and every helm just showing above the edge of the shield on the rein-arm, and at once the shock was joined. The few knights at the head of this London mob were struck and reeled; one, Hastings, turned before the horses met, whether at the horse's will or his own it was for his friends or his detractors to determine; it careered out of action, over the hill. Segrave and the rest were pressed into a mass of struggling footmen, in which the swords of Edward's command made a massacre for a moment or so; then the whole force of the Londoners broke into a dust of panic, and tore, each man at his speed, up the slope of the hill.

It is in the character of such a rout that men flying afoot do the worst for themselves. The mounted knights, who a moment before had been galloping at the head of that wedge of Londoners, still fought and still controlled their broken formation. They got them down the steep bank to the right upon the Offham Road, where the mass of the enemy's cavalry could hardly pursue, but the

unmounted Londoners ran anyhow and blind up the slope of the hill, panting and suffering slaughter, and after them, now gathering to strike, now shepherding in from the flanks, now halting a moment to re-form and then again charging at a word, Edward's command pursued.

Those first seconds before the shock had seemed long, perhaps, to either of the combatants, but the pursuit, though long, seemed short. For an hour and for two hours this interrupted galloping and murder continued, until at last a remnant of the Londoners had got off into the woods upon the escarpment of the Downs, a larger number were dragged, prisoners, by valets behind the cavalry, but the most lay wounded and dead all along that stretch of smooth, grassy land where now is the down-hill of the racecourse as you look at it from the Castle of Lewes.

A bunch of cavalry returned, their horses white with sweat, their riders heavy with fatigue, from an attack upon the chariot at the summit of the hill, where De Montfort's banner flapped vigorously from its high pole. They had failed to find their quarry. Edward also drew rein, and saw Luzignan a little way off halting as he did ; he was drawing the leather palm of his glove, where no mail was, over the sweat of his forehead beneath the helm.

Edward turned his very tired and slightly wounded horse towards that spot, and cried to him : " *Midi chauffe ! beau sire !* " But it was long past noon. They halted thus for a moment, irresolute ; they looked round and saw that the command was whole ; there was nothing more to kill, to capture, or to destroy ; they went back down the hill slowly all together, and each wondered whether elsewhere the action had been engaged.

Before them, upon this return toward Lewes, the round Down made a horizon beyond which was nothing but the blue height of Firle Beacon and Mount Caburn nearer by, with white clouds in the May sky, and a sunlight now growing mellow. They bore to the right in anxiety, hearing no clamour of pursuit nor any sign of victory in the further wing. Next, as they descended, the tower of the Priory peeped above that horizon, and in a little while the whole of the sloping glacis in front of Lewes wall was again before them. Here, again, Prince Edward halted at the head of his command ; he saw upon that plain sparse figures lying, an old black windmill with a group of the enemy round it, and a blazoned cloth hung from a window of it as though to summon help, while all along the wall of the town long troops of men gathered and poured towards the gates, but they seemed

to have no opponents. He began to understand.

He sent a man forward towards the mill as near as he might dare go, and when that messenger returned he learned that the blazon was the blazon of Allemaigne; he saw from the height of the Priory the red dragon of Wessex and of the Pendragonship which had been his father's banner, and he knew that he had missed the fight, that his uncle was caught in the mill, that the King, his father, was caught behind those Priory walls, that the men pressing against the gate of the city were Montfort's men.

In those few hours of his fury the main action had been tried and lost, and the cause of the Crown had been thrown away.

CRESSY

AUGUST 26, 1346

Upon August 26, 1346, *Edward III., retreating with some twenty-five thousand men or less upon the sea after a successful raid in Northern France, was caught up by the French King, in pursuit, at Cressy (the French Crécy), in Ponthieu. He beat off this host, quite four times his own in number, with complete success*

CRESSY

AUGUST 26, 1346

IT was Saturday, August 26, in the year 1346. The weather was stormy at the turn of the year, but with intervals of mellow and warm sunlight between. The vast host, in a sort of medley of camp-followers, of peasants mixed in with fighting men, of local guides and of hired soldiers from Geneva, concentrated irregularly by many roads up from the South and from the waters of the Somme.

The march in general had been fatiguing and long; there was no unity of command, the concentration was ill-effected, when those who first came to the brow and beyond a little wood which flanks the Roman Road—that great Roman Road from Amiens to Boulogne, where some remnant of a paving still showed and where was to be found the best of the bad going in that time—saw right before them the disciplined array of the invaders.

It was a new sight for them. The little army of Edward, carefully marshalled under its squires,

had moved untouched and with soldierly rapidity right up the Seine, doubling back in Normandy, then with a sort of swoop on to Picardy. They had meant to catch it against the estuary of the Somme the day before, but a local traitor had been bought and had shown Edward an old hard-way across the estuary at low tide; the invaders had beaten back the detachment sent to resist them upon the further side. It was upon the day before, the Friday, that these things had been done, and the force from overseas had marched through the forest and on into the little town of Cressy, going through the countrysides which were the dowry of Edward's own mother, and coming upon places and names which her infamous wars had rendered familiar in the rent-rolls of her revenue and in the lordships of her supporters.

It was already past noon when this sight was seen by the mixed hundred thousand of the Valois, and that King noted how little remained of the day after so long and wearying and disordered a march suffered by his four straggling columns; yet the King of France did not deploy, whether because he could not from a lack of unison in his forces or from the most imperfect synchrony of the various bodies he nominally commanded, or for some other reason, of haste, anger, bewilderment or despair,

or fatigue, the mass of the host still lay huddled in long streaming lines, the heads of which alone debouched upon the field of battle.

That field had been chosen with such skill as crowned the opponent of the Valois with genius; nor could any soldier about to enter the conflict disregard it. It was a shallow roll of land (how many such in Europe have seen the frenzy of great defeats!). There was not in it one yard of dead ground, but bare, burnt fields dipping some fifty feet in half a mile, and then, beyond the gentle hollow, rising again somewhat more steeply to the low crest beyond. There ran a road by which every communication was easy along the fighting line and behind that road a level plateau in good cover and suitable for the reserves. In the midst of the crest three windmills broke the skyline. In the largest and most central, which was solidly built and of stone, Edward himself took up his place to watch the battle. He was in green picked out with gold, on foot and unarmoured, and he bore in his hand not a sword but a white wand. He was a young man full of fire, and down on the steepest of the slope below him and to the right his eldest son, a smooth-faced boy, all armoured in dark steel, rode in the midst of French and English squires, the vassals of his father.

The time drew on, and yet no movement was made. The stragglers of the French still kept coming in. The soldierly forces of Edward, few, compact, exact, rose up from where they had been lying at rest upon the stubble, formed and made ready, every man stretching his bow. Upon such discipline and order the success of a retreat depends, and here in this retreat there was to be asked of them as sharp a covering action and as anxious a resistance as could be well asked of any small army caught, in its rapid fall backward, upon the sea. How great and how tense was the anxiety of that hour no record remains, for it was forgotten or swallowed up in what followed.

The afternoon had far advanced, the sun already stood behind the triple line upon the crest of the fields of Cressy—a triple line all excellently deployed, rightly ordered, and framed with a sufficient officering at every interval—when there came ominously up from the northward and blocking out the sun the advance of a broad stormcloud. Its shadow fell first upon the English King and his little invading army, it swept across the deserted hollow between the two enemies, it engulfed the unready herd at the summit of the further slope, and as it moved there went before it in the sky a great bird drove of rooks cawing loudly before the

tempest. When this cloud had already veiled the sun and made in men's eyes a darkness as unnatural as eclipse, there fell a torrent of rain beating and blinding in the face of the Valois mob, and of all the great lords who had come in such disorder to conduct it after their fashion, and against the hirelings from Geneva, who carried on their shoulders the complex and heavy cross-bow of their trade. It rained thus blindingly for the little while that a summer storm can last; the landscape was blotted out and the earth, dry and bare after harvest, splashed and sputtered, under the rage of the rain. It had soon passed, the sun shone again upon the drenched fields, and the army of Edward reappeared in the same order and still awaiting upon the defensive the action of the enemy. Then it was, too late, that the French King ordered the charge. Not with the horsemen; these would keep their place or advance, but slowly down the gentle slope before them; the Genevese should go first, come into bow-shot and shake the opposing infantry before his chivalry was unleashed to gallop and drive them down. In a long wavering line, parallel to the irregular front of the French host, the Genevese went forward, crossed the valley and began to rise upon the opposing side. They halted three times for a moment to give their

cry, they painfully wound up the strings of their cross-bows, bending to the task, and then at a full range discharged their volley of quarrels upon the triple line immediately above and before them, and all the while the horsemen, half a mile behind, walked at a pace ready to charge when that volley should be delivered. But hardly had the noise of the quarrels come back upon the wind, humming in their weighty flight, when another slighter and keener noise succeeded to it, and the air was thick in the midst of the Genevese line and behind it, with the little white plumes of the yard-long arrows that had come at the right and chosen moment with exact aim at a range not expected and with the precision that only long drill and habit can produce, cutting through the advance line of the cross-bowmen ; these began in their long, open order to flinch here and there ; for one man hurriedly rewinding his machine would be another struck, another cowering, another, that had flung his instrument down, flying out of range before the next volley of the yard-long arrows should sing. The need was immediate ; the French lords and their King, cursing the Genevese, charged suddenly. It was the last of the great unquestioned charges which from Iconium to this day had decided the warfare of Christendom. Twenty accidents

made it fail, and in its failure drag down the strength of the kingdom. The earth, still sodden, clogged it; the forces bunched, inaccurately divided going without one command, men pressing forward from the rear to be in with the gallop and to strike a blow; the broken, the flying, and the disordered Genevese were so many obstacles upon which the big horses should stumble, and for every horse so stumbling, or falling, a man, weighted with 5 st. of iron, fell and yet more impeded his fellows crowding from behind. The front, irregular even at the onset, was hopelessly broken, was lost. Here and there an individual tore up the hill, escaped from the crush; such did but afford an easier mark for the new volley. For right into that welter came the second discharge of the arrows, murderously catching the horses in neck and shoulder and under the mailed frontals and the legs, bringing them down, and men also sometimes, in the joints of the armour. Above the noise of falling metal and the shouting came now and then a sound more novel: the boom of little guns. The whole mile of confused riding eddied and whirled. It neither desired to nor could it retreat; but, upon it thus checked, the mass of its own followers, pages and peasants, and footmen, swarmed, intending to aid but not aiding, and

again, and once more, there poured into it the exact and disciplined arrows. Nowhere did any number of the charging swords get home together upon the crest by the high road, and Edward, watching from his mill, could see his triple line unbroken everywhere, and below it all down the slope his enemy rolled in confusion.

Only upon the right, where there is steeper ground, had the forces plainly met, and there his son, the boy, and those around him, were pressed for some little time in a *mêlée*. But soon, though they had sent for aid and he had given none, he could see them pressing forward. Here alone did the English line advance, and here in the last rally of the French forces the blind King of Bohemia—when this English advance upon the right had already turned the carnage of the main line—charged in a hopeless, single sort of fashion without hope of success or reward, his bridle tied to other bridles, hungry only to strike, and, of course, was killed. The King also would have attempted (for he had survived) some last, useless, blind and furious thing, but his gentlemen forced him back outward and away from the field, and he rode and rode and rode until late that evening he knocked at the door of a great abbey in a wood, and when the monks' porter called through the little wicket,

"Who knocks here?" the Valois answered in a despairing way and loudly, "The Fortune of France."

As that evening fell upon the little hollow in front of Cressy town many men went about with lanterns killing or ransoming the wounded, peering at the armouries of the dead, and noting the names of the great lords. There were many thousands lying thus, pinned in their armour among the slain and wounded horses and gathered like a harvest by the victors. Next day they buried the dead, they gathered spoil, they burnt wreckage, they heard mass for the souls of the fallen. With the Monday the twenty thousand, full of victory, resumed their march back upon the sea.

In this way was fought the chief and the most complete of the many great actions which have covered the retreat of an army.

THE END OF HENRY IV.

MARCH 19, 1413

On March 19 (*or* 20), 1413, *Henry IV., who had usurped the Crown by treason from his cousin Richard, fourteen years before, died in the Abbot's Chamber at Westminster. He was prematurely aged, afflicted with a horrible disease and suffering from epileptic fits, the last of which seized him as he prayed, on March* 19, *at King Edward's shrine in the Abbey. In his time, and just before it, the division between poor and rich had been violent; religious visionaries had accentuated this feeling and mixed it with Messianic, Apocalyptical and Mystical solutions of social problems. Also in his time and thence onward the official suppression of philosophical discussion became traditional. In one contemporary account sailors boasted that his body, on its way to funeral, had been thrown overboard*

THE END OF HENRY IV.

MARCH 19, 1413

TWO men, sweeping a kennel that ran between St. Stephen's and the vast apse of the Abbey on a March morning, saw the King go by.

He was in a litter, and the curtains were drawn to shield him from the bold wind, but where they hung loosely by the pole at the corner they could just see a face upon a pillow. It was an awful face, red, made hideous by disease, and the hair and the ruin of expression were those of an old man. The carriers took it by quickly, and round by the little gate that was there into the South Transept, and as it passed through, one of the men made the sign of the Cross and looked frightened, the other, who was younger, laughed at him. Neither of them was full grown when was the great betrayal of King Richard, but they were full of the tradition of the common people, knowing very well that usurpation and the denial of right and Parliaments and the rest were good for great lords but evil for God's flock. So they went on sweeping the

kennel, the March wind howled down the alley and whistled past the splendid buttresses of the Abbey. Very high up in the pure air, in the narrow strip of sky between the high walls of the Palace and of the Minster, birds were wheeling and poising themselves against the wind.

The elder sweeper said to the younger after a little (first looking round to see that no master could watch him ceasing from his labour): "Parson Tylle will have at him to-day!" and he chuckled. "Would God poor priests would never shrive great lords!"

The younger man said that come good, come ill to great lords, it was always ill for God's flock, and that for his part all parsons were one to him, and he believed not a word they told him. Having sworn to this by the Mother of God, he went on sweeping.

But, inside the South Transept, where it was much warmer and quite silent and dark, the King lay for awhile in his litter and groaned; then he bade them take him forward again whither he had to go. But just as the four men laid hold of the handles and the man-at-arms struck the tombs beneath with his staff, and as the King within groaned at the pain any movement gave him, he thought suddenly of another thing, and asked,

as loudly as his disease and weakness would permit, where, if anywhere, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved that day. The man-at-arms walked forward to look if there were a light, and coming back he said it was reserved at the High Altar for some purpose, although this was not a feast.

"Then," said Henry, "you shall not carry me past, but I must pray."

So, when his litter was before the gate of the Choir, they set him down again, and to the wonder of one at least of his carriers, who was an up-country man and to whom the custom was not known, the King made a full obeisance to the ground. Then he motioned them to bear him forward again and groaned. So they took him till they came to the shrine of King Edward. There he knelt as best he could—but with vast difficulty—and prayed.

The fruits of life are eaten as they come; they had all of them passed from his hands; the long memory of examples neglected, the great tradition of that shrine, a tradition he had despised, weighed upon him and added a dreadful fervour to his prayer. The most of it was a repetition of the set forms in which he trusted, but through them there ran in his mind one major note of appeal, insistent, dominating all, that he might reach Jerusalem; for Death is never seen, however near. He had

carefully hoarded gold: he had spared neither himself nor others, nor the blood of the poor in the matter, nor their hunger, nor the position of great princes. But he had still in the last months (he implored his God to remember it) gathered gold to gold, and all for that good work at Jerusalem; and in his agony he remembered the prophecy that if God would not accept that offering nor permit him to see the Tomb of the Lord, then it should be a sign that his own soul was reprobate. The great treason he had done and all that had sprung from it—his unknightly fear of the powerful, his evil cruelty to whatever of the pack ran separate from the rest, his ceaseless intrigue which had destroyed all that fine youthful courage which he had boasted in the saddle before he stooped to betray—all this, the ruin of his earthly honour, would drag him down to Hell.

Even as he thus prayed in despair and yet in supplication the attitude overcame him. The disturbance of his posture affected his sense, his head swam, and he was falling when his servants ran and caught him as he fell. They took him quite unconscious into the Abbot's rooms. There, after some hours, he opened his eyes and found the world again, and knew that his doom had not yet come.

They had sent for his confessor while he lay in that fit, and the man was there, Parson Tylle, full of his duty, and, like a true cleric, alone possessing the courage to approach the repulsive figure. It was appalling not so much from the horrible condition of the skin as from that contrast which, thank Heaven, is but rarely seen between the externals of age and the absence of maturity in the soul; for though Henry was far from fifty, nay, but forty-five, the hands, the forehead, the eyes, and all the rest were those of a man broken by the last process of years.

His confessor still urged him, and he was willing to repent. In what remained of his voice he gave just counsels for his son and for the new reign; but in the matter of his chief crime he saw no issue, and to every admonition that he should make reparation he could only find the answer that reparation was not in his power. The thing had struck root and was beyond him. He left it to his lineage. And he saw that for his part he was willing, but that his lineage would not bear the abandonment of the Crown. Whether, as dying men may do, he saw how that treason, which had taken root, would bear other blossom in the end—madness and loss of empire, defeat, civil war, and, at last, the extinction of his House—there is no record. He

lay there, confessed as to what he could confess, and absolved in such things as they had the power to absolve him in, and still regretting Jerusalem. His weakness increased very quickly, and in a little while he died.

* * * * *

They would bury him in Canterbury, not at Windsor, which was too kingly; not here in Westminster, where he had forbidden the King, his cousin, whom he had despoiled and murdered, to lie.

To take the body to Canterbury they put it aboard ship in the Thames, and the master, waiting for the turn of the tide, dropped down at last by night, having lashed upon his decks, with other cargo, the first of the Lancastrians.

But when they got to where the river broadens and a vessel first feels the lump coming in from the Swin, the wind freshened, the sea rose, the flood was now against them. The master was in peril, —he and his crew—and men in peril at sea have a fear of the dead.

When, therefore, many hours later they had safely landed and the coffin had been borne with great pomp to be lain under the protection of St. Thomas; and when, after the ceremonial, the townspeople went off to drink together, one man

of that cathedral city took with him to drink at the "Keys" a sailor whom he knew, and whose conversation he hoped would raise him in the esteem of his fellows at the board that evening, for the sailor had been one of the crew that had brought by water the body of the King.

They drank all together, these two companions and those that had gathered round, and when they were full of ale, and had become bold with it and had sung some songs, and when evening had fallen, the sailor saw fit to tell them this tale: That in the gale of the night (they all remembered the gale?) he and certain companions, whose names he dared not give, had lightened the ship lest it should founder; they had not lightened it of lead nor of iron, nor of any part of the cargo, but they had lightened it secretly of an evil thing—they had jettisoned the body of the King.

THE FAMILIAR

MAY 1588

In the second week of May 1588 *the fleet of transports* (*the Armada*) *which were to sail from Spain and to carry troops from the Netherlands to invade England, lay ready in the Tagus. In what follows is imagined a scene in the Royal Palace at Madrid where council is held as to the date of sailing*

THE FAMILIAR

MAY 1588

AMONG those who advised the Court of Madrid under Philip II. was a man of singular temper, already elderly, a noble, but of the meaner sort, very proud, poor and trusted by but a few. Nevertheless the King would continually send for his adviser, and he was called "The Familiar." It was now many years gone by—when he was secretary to a rather fatuous cousin of his, a bishop—a debate with regard to the irrigation of the Valley of Daroca, where the Crown had lands, arose, and he had maintained against all expert opinion that a certain dam would not hold, and in fact the dam broke the week after. From this he passed to many other instances of judgment, giving no reasons for his conclusions and perhaps having none; but once and again upon matters more and more important, proving always so inspired that men began to be a little afraid of him.

When, therefore, the fixed determination of the

King to send a fleet to transport troops from Flanders against England had matured, and the fleet was waiting in Lisbon Harbour to sail, he could not but be summoned, to name the day that would be lucky for setting out. His conclusion was simple enough. He would name no date. He condemned the expedition altogether.

Upon a matter so important and so urgent, one on which the Crown was so fixed, and one in which such enormous money interest had already grown up, his opposition did nothing but exasperate. Nevertheless he maintained it, and he maintained it against all reason. He stood respectfully enough beside the Council Board (at which he had no right to sit). He was dressed all in black, with white lace at his throat and wrists. The splendour of the room to which he had been summoned had made his isolated figure the more outstanding; his erect posture before all that seated grandeur singled him out for a little superstition, and very much opposition. The fat cleric, his cousin, now grown old and a Cardinal, looked at him over his shoulder, called him by his Christian name, and said: "Against the Government again?" and then chuckled. An old Duke on the opposite side of the table with a heavy, avaricious face, a man who stood to make five thousand more in the

equipment of the transports, looked at him with hatred, for he knew the power of the man's mere pronouncements upon the keen and decisive, but somewhat superstitious, imagination of the King. The King, indeed, watched him with an expression very different from that upon the face of any of his councillors, for, while in some things he was much superior to them all, he was quite different from the type of mercantile nobility that served him. He was above all a devoted man, and a very soldierly one. Moreover there was between him and his dark adviser, this Familiar, a very strong, secret, and undefinable bond, partly of good service rendered, but much more of a similarity in character. For each was direct, each of rapid judgment, each somewhat mournful.

The Familiar spoke again, shaking his head. "I can only tell you what I have told you," he said. "You have asked for my word and I have given it."

A sailor there present, a very refined, feminine sort of man, lolling back in his great chair of state, said in a delicate ironical voice: "Have you so much as seen the sea?

The Familiar coloured a little; he had not. Many laughed, till Philip looked up sternly; then leaning forward himself over the table, in an

earnest way, and giving this stranger fellow all his titles with great courtesy, he said: "Tell me, the King, as you have told me before, as you told me in the matter of my marriage there, whether it is indeed your fixed opinion."

The stranger did not raise his head; he answered in a very low voice: "I cannot but repeat it." Philip sighed and leant backwards, with a hand on either arm of his throne. A cleric who had been his tutor, and who had survived to be present at these Councils of State, stood up, and begged leave to speak. The King nodded to him, and he began:

"I have always spoken clearly since your childhood, and you are too great to be angered by what I shall say; which is, that the dignity of your realm, and of your possession—half the world, as I may say, in numbers, and much more than half the world in glory—forbid you, or should forbid you, from indulgence of this kind. All is plainly known, the nature of the campaign, our policy upon the issue of that campaign and the necessity for it. If it is ill policy for the strong to attack the very weak—and it is so in general—yet there are times when this inglorious thing must be done. However contemptible one's opponent, a people civilised and great, whose mission under God it is to bring order and peace to the Christian world, cannot put

up with petty piracy, striking at and disturbing our vast and settled commerce, and unsupported, remember, by any Prince in Europe. And I would implore you, with what authority I have, to forget altogether your weakness in the matter of this man, to do at once what cannot be postponed for more than a few days, and to sign the order." He sat down.

"Admiral," said the King, "have you nothing to say?" The Admiral shrugged his shoulders. "I do not see what you can say in such a matter; everything is calculable; we know the elements of the affair; there cannot be an appreciable opposition, and we are all decided, twenty times, that it is worth while. Whether it was worth while was (but that was months ago) the only question."

"How do they fight?" said the King.

The sailor was interested at once. He put his hands upon the table and went into details with zeal. "They fight just as their character would lead one to think; they don't come close; they are astonishingly quick, and they love a light vessel. They *raid*. They depend, as I suppose all pirates do, on gun-fire. They carry ridiculously heavy guns for their small boats. But the whole thing is nagging and worrying, it isn't fighting. They

have no formation ; it's every ship for itself. They had something of formation under Henry, but that's all gone. Their gun-fire's very good, but there's no order about it. You can be certain you will never have a converging fire from several at once. The whole thing's random. . . . What you would expect ! "

As he was talking thus the Cardinal and the old Duke were each of them nodding gravely and with approval, and the Cardinal spoke next without leave. " You speak with professional knowledge, Admiral "—they bowed to each other—" and we all accept your expert conclusion——"

The King interrupted sharply : " You mean, Admiral, they can raid a harbour (as they have) or harass stragglers, and would be quite incapable of a fleet action or of seriously engaging a heavy line ? "

The Admiral smiled with a completely sincere contempt, and waved the very suggestion away with his hand.

" I was about to say," said the Cardinal more pompously, " that what the Admiral has told us thoroughly agrees with what we laymen know, both those of us who, like myself, have done work for the Empire in England—which I did as a younger man—and those of us who know the place only as students, or even by repute. The whole

framework of their society has gone to pieces. They are rotten through. No two men think alike on the most urgent matters, their towns decline, their population is falling. Much of their land has passed to adventurers who waste it openly. As for the bastard who pretends to rule them, one cannot tell how few support her claim. The whole thing is a terror, and even her creatures are as much the slaves of fear as they are of avarice. Nations fall sick and they recover, or the sickness endures and they die. England is past praying for. They have attempted here and there to rule the heathen, which is the test of a people, and they have failed; they can nowhere fix their power upon land outside their own boundaries; they have lost all tradition and respect; the whole thing is a welter; it is a sort of ulcer to be cut out of Europe. Dangerous only as a poison, not as an armed enemy."

Then, looking at his cousin again over his shoulder, he said: "You were with me just after my return when Henry was alive, and you remember my speaking of some sort of order. And then the man had character; I believe you are basing yourself on that memory." The Familiar shook his head. "Well, anyhow I believe that experience impressed you unconsciously; everything

has gone from bad to worse since. In Flanders even then (we said) they had not much of an army —imagine their doing a thing like that to-day ! "

The Duke opposite leant back and laughed heartily.

" Surely it is waste of time," he said. " You can do nothing with a prophet. I can understand," he added with serious hypocrisy, " a well-founded objection on the financial side " (he bowed to the Treasurer, who looked more solemn than ever, for he was a fool), " but mere prophecy !—why, the thing is actually done. It is only a question of to-day, or to-morrow, or next week. And," he added gravely, thinking of his five thousand, " every day means money."

Philip looked up, but the man in black still stood silent : " You can go," said the King.

The Familiar passed through the great carved door of the room, and went down the marble stairs into the blazing light of the courtyard. When he had gone there was silence for a little while, and in all, save the King, a feeling of relief, as though something uncanny had been cleared from their presence, so that they could breathe again. But the King for a whole five minutes sat staring before him with empty hands. The Cardinal pushed a parchment towards him ; he came back

from his reverie and signed it with the proud formula of Spain: "I the King."

* * * * *

When Philip so signed a final Order in Council the rule of that strict Court demanded that all should rise and make obeisance to him. The Council rose, the laymen with their hands upon the hilt, the clerics with hands folded. He saluted them and went out alone. When he had gone out one looked slyly at another, and then there was a general loud laugh, not very pleasing to the King's old tutor, but hearty in all the rest. They rose good-humouredly, joking together, and one of them slyly tapped his forehead, but only so that a very near friend could see him, and even that friend reproved the gesture.

Upon May 19—or, as we should say, the 29th—the Armada sailed.

THE "ARK-ROYALL"

JULY 27 (OR, AS WE SHOULD SAY, AUGUST 7), 1588

The "Ark-Royall" was, during the struggle with the Armada, the flagship of the English Lord Admiral, a landsman, one of the Howards, a family recently grown very powerful through the wealth taken from the Church

THE "ARK-ROYALL"

JULY 27, 1588

THE Straits of Dover, when one approaches them from the east, are like the mouth of a great river, nor do they ever bear that aspect more than at sunset, when, if one is in mid-stream and the day has been clear, one sees quite close upon either hand, not ten miles off each way, the highlands of either shore, those highlands branching outwards till they are lost on the horizon as might be lost the spreading highlands of an estuary.

If the stream be at the ebb the illusion is enhanced, for one sees the pouring out of the flood in the way that a river should go; it is then not difficult to forget the North Sea behind one, and to imagine, as one drifts down the mid-channel towards the colour in the west, that one is still embraced by the land and that one is only just now setting out to sea. The sun broadens into a long belt of haze before it touches the horizon, and the light of it catches either line of cliffs. It seems a very peaceful sea.

July 27, 1588, was of this kind. The sun was setting beyond the shoals of the Varne and all the great roundell of Spanish ships were clustered in a group from Grisnez eastward, coming up very slowly against the tide; they sailed above an easy holding-ground not far from the French land. The huge bulk of the transports, high forward and astern, cast long shadows upon the calm; it was the merest breath of wind that carried the Armada on, or rather, just held it against the strong coast-wise stream. When the last of them and the slowest had passed outside the shoals that cluster under the steep of Grisnez the rattling of chains began through the clear and silent air; there were signals both with bugle and with bunting, a gun was fired, and the wide fleet dropped anchor in fifteen fathom and rode, every ship with its bows upstream and every high poop in the blaze of the sunset. It was Saturday evening. All week long they had crawled and beaten up the Channel, and all week long the little English craft with their much heavier artillery had stood the recoil of their own great guns and had peppered the enemy from well out of range; and one ship the Spaniards had lost by collision so that she lagged and Drake caught her, full of gold, and another a traitor had fired, and this also, or the

charred hulk of it, had been towed into an English harbour.

The Lord Admiral of England all that week had followed in the *Ark-Royall*. He had followed them by day and by night; all the hours a man can see to fire he ordered the intermittent cannonade, and now upon this calm evening, with the northerly breeze gone westward and dying down, he and his came up between the Spaniards and the sun. They also cast anchor just out of range, and from beyond the Straits from round the North Foreland came thirty more from London and joined the line.

It was soon dark. Long before midnight the craft began to swing, the smaller English vessels coming quickly round to the bubbling of the flood tide as it swirled round Grisnez, the larger Spanish transports catching the stream more slowly, but at last turned also east and west to the change of the sea, and with the turn of the tide the wind rose, though at first but little, and blew steadily out of the west and south in a gentle and constant manner, and the sky clouded. The beacon upon Dover cliff flickered far off to the west and the northward; one could see bonfires or the glare of them against the sky of the Weald, and there were more lights than usual passing up and down the English shore. Upon the French, the tall Pharos of Calais alone

shone over the marshy flats. Grisnez was a huge lump against the darkness. But all the surface of the sea was dotted with the lamps of the fleets and the broken water was full of glints and reflections.

In Dunkirk, a very few miles up the shore, waited that army which, if in any manner it could have crossed the day's march of salt water, would have raised the Catholic north of England, occupied the indifferent south, and held London—to the complete reversal of the fate of Europe. Further still up coast, at Nieuport, was their reserve. It was midnight and past midnight; the Sunday morning had begun, and the wind, chopping a little northward and uncertain, but in general a little south of west, blew in gusts that soon joined to half a gale. The sea rose, and along the line of the sand and under the dark steep beyond, the long white line of breakers was very clear through the darkness.

Aboard the *Ark-Royall* the Lord Admiral Howard, the landsman, took counsel and did as he was told. They took eight ships of the worst, cleared them and stuffed them with all manner of burnable and missile things, they put in barrels of pitch and of powder, great stones and round shot, beams of dry wood and slack cordage. They warped them round in the difficulty and tossing of that weather till they pointed up stream, and they

set square sails on each that the wind should catch them, so that with the gale and the flood tide together they might bear down upon the Spanish Fleet. These derelicts were held by warps from the stern, and the sails so set strained the warps too powerfully until the signal was given. Then, with great despatch, the last men left aboard touched fire to matches in twenty places upon one or the other, and tumbled over the side. The strands that held them were cut, and as the first flames leapt from their decks they careered before the wind against the Armada. It was about two o'clock in the morning.

From the *Ark-Royall,* at the head of the English line, was a sight not seen again in history. The conflagration burnt up enormous, clear and high, blazing first from the sterns of the fireships and showing the square sails brilliant red against the night. The gale blew the flames before it in broad sheets, and one could hear the roaring of them even against the wind. Down weather that floating town of Spanish galleys shone out as the dreadful light came near ; the tumbling and foaming sea in a circle all around was conspicuous in the strong glare, and the shape of every wave was marked clearly for a cable's length around.

The Armada awoke. Among the thousands who

crowded the decks, impeding the haste of the sailors as they ran to let the anchors go, were many who remembered that same awful sight upon the Scheldt three years before, when the fireships had driven against Parma's boom. There was no time for the slow work of the capstans; men took axes and hacked at the cables forward; the canvas was run up as might be in such a medley, and the monstrous bulks paid round in very varied manner, confused and hampering one another as their head-sails, with the sheets hard a-weather, caught the gale. Not a few, on whom too much had been set or too hastily, careened a moment dangerously to leeward, then recovered; there were shouts everywhere and a babel of orders; men running with fenders to hang over the sides, as one big wall of wood or another surged up too near in the darkness; at last all were turned and free, and the herd of them went driving before the south-west wind along that perilous shore. The men on the *Ark-Royall* and the Lord Admiral, watching from the height of the rail, cursed to see no fireship get home. The set of the seas and the slant of the wind drove one after another upon the flat stretches of the beach, and there they burnt out, bumping higher and higher as the tide rose along the flats, and to their burning was added dull explosions as

the fire reached their powder. But the Spanish fleet was gone.

The *Ark-Royall* also weighed anchor and all her sisters with her to take up that long chase again. It seemed that the attempt had failed—but with the weather that was to be and the port of embarkation passed, the invasion could never come; this island had been certainly saved before the stormy morning broke beyond the marshes of the lowlands.

* * * * *

There was lightning all over heaven before it was day, and the raging water was a little tamed by cataracts of rain. The light grew dully through the furious weather, the Spanish line was scattered twenty miles thwart of the Flanders shore; their leading ships could see the opening of Ostend, their laggards were still far west of Nieuport and near their panic of the night. Off Gravelines the long-range artillery of the English caught them. In spite of the gale each fleet rallied to the sound of the cannon, and all that Sunday long the guns answered each other without a pause, but the English had the range and the weather, and the gigantic Spanish fabrics, leaning away from the blast, shot short or high, while the English broadsides, leaning downward and toward the mark,

poured in an accurate fire; those smaller vessels also turned well and quickly even in such a sea, making of themselves a changing target, but having fixed targets before them in the lumbering masses of their opponents. The success of their gunnery lent them hardihood, and the more daring would sweep quite close to the Spanish sides and sheer off again; so was Drake's ship chiefly struck. Had he chosen he might have avoided any such offence and have done his work at full range and in safety, but he was warm to it, and the dancing manœuvre pleased him. He was hulled forty times, but he swam.

When the night fell this running business had got off the mouth of the Scheldt. The wind backed a little and blew stronger, but no longer toward the land; the great Armada ran northward before it into the midst of a widening sea, and so up and away, and an end to the great concern.

But the men of the *Ark-Royall* (which had commanded all that success) did not know its greatness, and the Lord Admiral, back in port from putting the enemy past the Firth, was fearful of their return, and wrote to Walsingham: "Sir,—Sure bind, sure find. A kingdom is a great wager. Sir, you know security is dangerous."

He might have spared his ink; the thing was done.

THE APPRENTICE

JANUARY 30 (OR, AS WE SHOULD SAY, FEBRUARY 10), 1649

Charles I. was executed on this day, upon a scaffold outside the second window on the north of Whitehall Banqueting Hall, at four in the afternoon

THE APPRENTICE

JANUARY 30, 1649

MEN were well into the working week; it was a Tuesday and apprentices were under the hard eyes of their masters throughout the City of London and in the rarer business places that elbowed the great palaces along the Strand. The sky was overcast and the air distastefully cold, nor did anything in the landscape seem colder than the dark band of the river under those colourless and lifeless January clouds.

Whether it were an illusion or a reality, one could have sworn that there was a sort of silence over the houses and on the families of the people; one could have sworn that men spoke in lower tones than was their custom, and that the streets were emptier. The trial and the sentence of the King had put all that great concourse of men into the very presence of Death.

The day wore on; the noise of the workmen could be heard at the scaffold by Whitehall; one hour was guessed at and then another; rumours

and flat assertions were busy everywhere, especially among the young, and an appentice to a harness-maker in the Water Lane near Essex House knew not what to believe. But he was determined to choose his moment and to slip away lest he should miss so great a sight. The tyranny of the army kept all the city in doubt all day long, and allowed no news; none the less, from before noon there had begun a little gathering of people in Whitehall, round the scaffold at which men were still giving the last strokes of the hammer. Somewhat after noon a horseshoe of cavalry assembled in their long cloaks and curious tall civilian hats; they stood ranked, with swords drawn, all round the platform. Their horses shifted uneasily in the cold.

The harness-maker's apprentice found his opportunity; his master was called to the door for an order from Arundel House, and the lad left his bench quickly, just as he was, without hat or coat, in the bitter weather, and darting through the side-door ran down through the Water Gate and down its steps to the river. The tide was at the flood and his master's boat lay moored. He cast her off and pulled rapidly up the line of gardens, backing water when he came to the public stairs just beyond Whitehall. Here he quickly tied the

painter and ran up breathless to Whitehall Gate, fearing he might have missed his great expectation. He was in ample time.

It was perhaps half-past three o'clock when he got through the gate and found himself in the press of people. Far off to the left, among the soldiery that lined the avenue from the Park to the Mall, and so to St. James', a continuous roll of drums burdened the still air.

The crowd was not very large, but it filled the space from the gate to the scaffold and a little beyond, save where it was pressed outward by the ring of cavalry. It did not overflow into the wide spaces of the park, though these lay open to Whitehall, nor did it run up towards Charing Cross beyond the Banqueting Hall.

The apprentice was not so tall as the men about him; he strained and elbowed a little to see, and he was sworn at. He could make out the low scaffold, a large platform all draped in black, with iron staples, and a railing round it; it covered the last three blank windows of Whitehall, running from the central casement until it met the brick house at the north end of the stonework; there the brickwork beneath one of the windows had been taken out so as to give access through it from the floor within to the scaffold on the same level

without; and whispers round told the apprentice, though he did not know how much to trust them, that it was through this hasty egress that the King would appear. Upon the scaffold itself stood a group of men, two of them masked, and one of the masked ones, of great stature and strong, leant upon the axe with his arm crossed upon the haft of it. A little block, barely raised above the floor of the platform, he could only see by leaping on tiptoe, catching it by glimpses between the heads of his neighbours or the shoulders of the cavalry guard; but he noticed in those glimpses how very low it was, and saw, ominous upon it, two staples driven as though to contain the struggler. Before it, so that one kneeling would have his face toward the Palace and away from the crowd, was a broad footstool covered with red velvet, and making a startling patch upon all that expanse of black baize.

It was cold waiting; the motionless twigs of the small bare trees in the Park made it seem colder still. The three-quarters struck in the new clock behind him upon Whitehall Gate, but as yet no one had appeared.

In a few moments, however, there was a movement in the crowd, heads turning to the right, and a corresponding backing of the mounted men to

contain the first beginnings of a rush, for the commanders of the army feared, while they despised, the popular majority of London ; and the wealthy merchants, the allies of the army, had not joined this common lot. This turning of faces towards the great blank stone wall of the Palace was caused by a sound of many footsteps within. The only window not masked with stone, the middle window, was that upon which their gaze universally turned. They saw, passing it very rapidly, a group of men within ; they were walking very sharply along the floor (which was here raised above the level of the window itself and cut the lower panes of it) ; they were hurrying towards the northern end of the great Banqueting Hall. It was but a moment's vision, and again they appeared in the open air through the broken brickwork at the far end of the stone façade.

For a moment the apprentice saw clearly the tall King, his face grown old, his pointed beard left full, his long features not moved. The great cloak that covered him, with the Great Star of the Garter upon the left shoulder, he drew off quickly and let fall into the hands of Herbert. He wore no hat ; he stepped forward with precision towards the group of executioners, and a little murmur ran through the crowd.

The old Bishop, moving his limbs with difficulty, but suppliant and attendant upon his friend, stood by in an agony. He helped the King to pull off his inner coat until he stood conspicuous in the sky-blue vest beneath it, and round his neck a ribbon and one ornament upon it, a George carved in onyx. This also he removed and gave to the Bishop, while he took from his hands a little white silken cap and fixed it firmly upon his long and beautiful hair. From beneath the sky blue of his garment, at the neck and at the wrists, appeared frills of exquisite linen and the adornment of lace. He stood for a few moments praying, then turned and spoke as though he were addressing them all. But the apprentice, though he held his breath and strained to hear, as did all others about him, could catch no separate word, but only the general sound of the King's voice speaking. The movement of the horses, the occasional striking of a hoof upon the setts of the street, the distance, covered that voice. Next, Charles was saying something to the masked man, and a moment later he was kneeling upon the footstool. The apprentice saw him turn a moment and spread his arms out as an example of what he next should do; he bent him toward the block—it was too low; he lay at full length, and the crowd lifted and craned to see him in this posture.

The four heavy strokes of the hour struck and boomed in the silence. The hands of the lying figure were stretched out again, this time as a final signal, and right up in the air above them all the axe swung, white against the grey sky, flashed and fell.

In a moment the group upon the scaffold had closed round, a cloth was thrown, the body was raised, and among the hands stretched out to it were the eager and enfeebled hands of the Bishop, trembling and still grasping the George.

A long moan or wail, very strange and dreadful, not very loud, rose from the people now that their tension was slackened by the accomplishment of the deed. And at once from the north and from the south, with such ceremony as is used to the conquered, the cavalry charged right through, hacking and dispersing these Londoners and driving them every way.

* * * * *

The apprentice dodged and ran, his head full of the tragedy and bewildered, his body in active fear of the horses that pursued flying packets of the crowd down the alley-ways of the offices and Palace buildings.

He went off by a circuitous way to find, not his master's house after such an escapade,

but his mother's, where she lived beyond St. Martin's.

The dusk did not long tarry; as it gathered and turned to night small flakes of snow began to fall and lie upon the frozen ground.

THE END OF THE STUARTS

DECEMBER 10 (OR, AS WE SHOULD NOW SAY, THE 20TH) 1688

The Kings of England had held by legitimate descent, or on the plea of it, from the Conquest to the close of 1688, *when the landed and merchant classes, relying on the strong religious support of London, and upon the unpopularity of the King in the West, called in a foreign army and transferred the Crown from James II., the last legitimate King, to his daughter and her husband. The prime act of James' fall was to send his wife and child away, he following*

THE END OF THE STUARTS

DECEMBER 10, 1688

IT was advisable in the old days for those who could travel by way of the Thames in London, or would cross that river, to await high tide, for everywhere down the long stretch of tidal water, from far above Westminster to far below the Tower, great stretches of mud forbade approach during three-quarters of the tide, save at some few places where a ditch or channel entered the stream (as at the Fleet) or where (as in the City of London) wharves had been constructed steep on to the water.

It was two in the morning and the tide was at full flood though not yet at its highest. The swirl of the water was pouring up under the walls of the Palace, past St. Stephen's, and on past the little houses by the waterside in the fringes of Westminster beyond, where the barges lay moored. The darkness was extreme, a gale roared up from the south-west against the tide and raised sharp waves in the quarter of a mile of river. Of the

shore beyond one could see nothing ; there were no lights, and even had there been the furious and ceaseless rain would have blotted out all perception of them.

At the foot of the little damp stairs next to the broad gravel slope of the ferry a small open boat tossed and bumped against the brickwork, with one man in it, guarding it. There was no watchman by nor any one abroad on such a night. It was the night following the Sabbath, and Protestant London was well asleep. It was impossible even to hear the noise of wheels through the roaring of the weather and the slapping of the water driven before the south-west wind against the river wall, when there appeared in the darkness at the head of the steps a coach that had come at speed, and soon descending from it and standing at the wall five figures, three women and two men. They were speaking hurriedly in a foreign tongue ; the one dressed as a common seaman, the other, it would seem, a gentleman ; and one of the women bore in her arms with care a little bundle of linen. As for the two others, they were Italians of the common people, a washerwoman and her friend. Even as they went down the few steps the shock of the wind appalled the women. The men handed them carefully down the little declivity. The boat was

held as fast as it could be on the tossing water, but not without difficulty. The washerwoman, who was the Queen, her Italian maid, the nurse, the bundle—which was a six-months child—were handed or carried into the boat and took their seats there. They were dressed very plainly and darkly ; the child remained asleep ; the secret was not betrayed. The two men, who had exchanged a word or two in French, stepped in after them, and the boat was shoved off.

It was the very early morning of Monday, the 10th—or, as we should now call it, the 20th—of December in the year 1688.

The oars did their best in the rough water and against the furious wind : the tide helped them, and the course, set almost directly against the wind, got them slowly towards the further shore. The passage was full of danger. They shipped water and heeled, the chop of the tide and the swirling eddies against the wind baffled them at every moment ; the boat was too small for such a load and for such weather, and when the oars missed a wave or struck it the peril was grave.

At last the water grew smoother under the lee of the buildings and of the water wall of Lambeth, and with a little seeking the craft of the waterman sufficed to find the public stairs upon the Surrey

side. They caught the ring, the silent women disembarked as best they could, though with greater ease than they had gone aboard. The boat was paid off, and the five stood together at the head of the steps looking for the coach that should have met them. It was not there.

All those tales of disaster which grow into such huge legends and all that atmosphere of dread which accompanies the abandonment of high resolves weighed upon the mind of the Queen. Her southern violence, grown to strength in the maturity of thirty years, her new maternity, the greatness of the despairing enterprise, the very fact that she herself so long opposed it, lent her courage, and she was concerned only for the boy of six months old exposed to such a storm.

They took what refuge they might under the shelter of the old church wall to their right, in desperate anxiety lest the cry of the child should betray them, or lest even on that wild December night some belated passer-by or some early traveller hailing the ferry or some watchman with his lantern turning the corner of the Archbishop's garden might not ask who they were and raise an alarm. The sailor—it was St. Victor thus clad—a noble from the Rhine, ran into the night. In a little while he had returned to find Lauzun still

guarding the women, and with him he brought from an inn near by the carriage which had delayed there. Lauzun accompanied the Queen and her maids within, the other, the sailor, sat upon the box by the driver as a kind of guard against accident or surprise, and they drove off through the tempest and the darkness eastward toward Gravesend, down that old road which has seen the marching of so many armies, the triumph and the abandonment of so many royal things, and which has been during all history our main avenue of approach and of retreat.

The adventure was completed, and successfully; the child, who was never to reign, was safe, and his mother also. With the daylight the ebb tide took them, under the loyalty of an Irish guard, down stream to the North Foreland; once outside the reef of Long-nose the gale struck them full, they had to anchor for the tide: then all that day, all the next night, they held desperate across the Straits, labouring for French land in the teeth of blinding weather. Mary of Modena, still defiant and still strong, lay abandoned below, still neglected in her disguise, and endured the passage.

Meanwhile in London James could not sleep. His character, very fixed and narrow, had in it certain passionate emotions. The safety of this woman,

whose opposition, violence, and sudden decisions he had endured for so many years, was a matter of more concern to him even than the last desperate tangle of the State wherein he was now hopelessly seized. The use of opiates by which he had attempted to secure some rest during those tragic days and nights had worked evilly upon a temperament already nervous and very hard worn by the treason of all whom he had trusted or loved. He was haggard with extreme fatigue and with the appalling vision of misfortune which rose enormous upon him from every side.

For hour after hour of that Monday in the drenching weather he had fretted, unable to bend his mind to anything, until at least so much good news as the safety of the Queen might mean should arrive. It was not until the day was well advanced that the news of her embarkation came to him, but when it came he could breathe again. Lauzun had accompanied the Queen to sea. St. Victor, the same that, dressed as a sailor, had watched the coachman and seen to the driving of the carriage, returned to London and gave his message to the King. Of what fate the Queen and Prince of Wales might have met in the Channel upon such a night and in such weather he could tell nothing. James was very certain that he could count them

less in peril upon the worst of seas than in the hands of whatever fanatical mob might have stopped them in the southern suburbs of the city.

That evening the King could sleep, but before he slept he sat down to write the letter which admitted his design to be rid of the island, and permitted such as still served him under arms and could make at least "a pretence of loyalty"—such also, and there were many, as were "true soldiers" and honourable in their service—to abandon his cause and to pit themselves no longer against a nation that was "poisoned" and the foreign army which that nation had "summoned."

The writs that had been drawn up in such haste for the summoning of the new Parliament had not all been issued; some yet remained; he himself burnt them and watched them burn. Then, it being perhaps 10 o'clock, he lay down; it was not for very long. At midnight he rose dressed as his wife had done twenty-four hours before, in black, quite plainly, and set out to follow step by step the line the Queen had followed, down the same hidden stairs, through the same paths of the gardens of Whitehall upon the river, then to be driven rapidly, Hales, whom he had protected

for his faith, sitting by him, and so to the same steps, by the same broad gravelled slope where was the ferry to the Lambeth shore. As they took boat in silence and over a stream less dangerous than that which had imperilled the Queen, the buildings upon the Westminster shore were not yet wholly blotted out in the darkness, when above the swing of the oars and their steady dip there was a little splash from something which James had thrown out into the night; by the sound it was of heavy metal, large for a man's hand; it was the Great Seal of England.

The two men landed; horses were ready for them. They rode and they rode through the last hours before dawn; they were well in the gardens of Kent before the late winter daylight, sodden with rain, rose over the flats of the shore. It was high morning before they reached the place of their embarkation. They took ship upon the rough estuary and made down stream, only to be stranded with the evening, held and at last delivered back to the capital where James could never again be, even for those few days, a true King. While these things were doing, Mary of Modena at last touched French soil at Calais and was free

It was in this way that the unity of English

kingship, dependent upon one theory of right and succession for six hundred years, was dissolved, and that the last attempt to found a strong executive in England to curb the rich and to sustain all against the few was washed away.

SARATOGA

OCTOBER 6, 1777

General Burgoyne, in progress to cut the American Rebellion in two by a march from the St. Lawrence to the sea, was successful in all the first part of his campaign. Gross dilatoriness in effecting the short portage from the Lakes to the Hudson gave the enemy time to concentrate on that river. He was hemmed in on the heights of Saratoga, found in a reconnaissance upon October 6 *(here described) that he could not retreat, and on the* 16*th surrendered. France was thus led to support the rebels, who obtained their independence less than six years later*

SARATOGA

OCTOBER 6, 1777

THEY had gone for now some days under the dripping woods in mournful weather; the straggling army finding no road, but rather clearings in the forest, short of food, short of cartridges and of powder, with the wheels stuck deep in mud, cattle rapidly commandeered and breaking down, men tired out, falling out under cover of evening and lost at roll-call. It was three days' march for a healthy man alone; the mixed force had taken three weeks.

They had suffered little harassment from anything but Nature. The farmers in the open country beyond the woods were sullen rather than hostile, and had gathered against them only when their own homesteads were in peril. At last, after so dispiriting a journey, they saw before them, broad and solemn under the changing colours of those autumn woods, the stream of the Hudson. They had, in the theory of the campaign, pierced through. They had come from one watershed to

another, they were upon the highway which cleft the Rebellion, and the more imaginative of them could contemplate far down that stream the victorious garrison of New York, the English harbour, and the sea that was wholly England's.

* * * * *

Three weeks later, upon the heights above Saratoga, Burgoyne sat, somewhat peevish, a politician (but not without humour), a gentleman, contemplating the night. The gusts were already cold, but the canvas flap stood open, and upon his camp-table a lantern alone gave light, for the wind would have extinguished candles. He had determined definitely upon retreat.

Were history written by contemporary pens (and, alas, it is very rarely so written) the bewilderment of that moment would be apparent.

All military events are, by the nature of the military trade, turned into a mathematical sequence, made into things of maps and plans which the intellect can rejoice in, and which the young officer can make his study or his toy; but the fight itself is usually a sort of chaos. So it was here. Precisely how the entanglement had come about neither Burgoyne himself nor any of his staff could have told you. The advance of the royal army towards the valley of the Mohawk had

been steady enough, the check before Stillwater had been indefinite of its kind; the hanging on, and hesitation by, the banks of the river had been without much plan, but also hardly tinged with the fear of failure; the gathering of the farmers round about and of the rude militia of the rebels had followed no exact co-ordination; but one day passed and another, news expected from down the Hudson never came, supplies from the North failed to arrive, there was an increasing friction in the working of the machine, an increasing doubt in the mind of the General—until at last, as the first week of October closed, that doubt had turned to a fear.

It was October 6, a Monday. The woods were very quiet all round, there was little sound save the drip from the corners of the canvas and from the leaves of neighbouring trees. The orders had been issued, and at a certain hour of the darkness the troops were gathered. They were not half the garrison. They were somewhat more than a quarter or perhaps a third of the men remaining who could still bear arms, and it was their function to take the road northward and to hold it against the dawn, when all their comrades would break quarters and with their train, though perhaps forced to abandon in such weather and upon such

sodden soil a portion of their pieces, begin definitely the retreat toward Fort Edward, and so by the Lakes to their base in Canada.

They were ordered in column, and they set forth.

Here and there at the heads of companies a lantern swung, and frequently commands rang out through the night, especially among the Germans, to whom the idea of formation was a religion. They formed and re-formed, dressing again and again with the slow stiffness they still maintained.

Such lights and such commands were permitted because the attempt had nothing of secrecy about it; that this disciplined and orderly European force should be annoyed by the rude militia of the backwoods seemed natural enough; that it should be intercepted by regular action as from a regular enemy seemed quite impossible. And so in reason it was impossible, nor did the armed farmers themselves know in the least how much they were attempting, nor was theirs a co-ordinate plan. The column marched through the night, secure from any intelligent envelopment, and weighted only by that bitterness which hangs over soldiers when they retrace the road.

Their leader, riding at the head of that long two miles or more of men and wheels, rode in silence. It was at a foot's-pace; the hoofs of his horse

went warily, feeling the uncertain ruts and mud of the woodland ride as it sank down toward the valley. The rider, so riding, had in his mind what he imagined to be a full conception of the misfortune to which he was subject; he had no vision of the whole disaster.

He saw as in a picture the general plan of the campaign postponed; he saw the rebellion now joining its two halves again from North to South; he saw the line of the Hudson abandoned and the seaports held sporadically by garrisons dependent perpetually upon the sea. He felt, as every soldier feels when a plan is mucked up and spoiled, a sort of tedious disappointment, largely personal, half anger and half exasperation; but in it all he saw nothing of tragedy. The force would regain the Lakes, they would rest upon that bright, dry, open shore of Champlain; the winter would confine them to the valley of the St. Lawrence; with the next year, with the next spring, the added experience of this false start would make the advance secure. A much larger and much better equipped command would cut like a steel edge from Canada to the Atlantic; perhaps it would not even be attacked. It would certainly be victorious. So they went on, he thinking these things, through an impenetrable night, to the sound of sogging foot-

steps in the mud of the woodlands and to the drip from the trees. A hundred yards ahead four pioneers felt the way, and a corporal with them.

The four pioneers had with them a lantern, and the light of it could be seen bobbing irregularly over the roughness of the ground. The corporal held it in his right hand; it swung between him and the private soldier who marched by his side.

There came one moment in the midst of this marching and this silence, this darkness and this reflection, when the whole avenue of the woodland and the arch of it was lit by a sudden and explosive blaze of light, and the sound of a musket crashed up and re-echoed from the boughs. A whirl of leaves fell from the splintered branch. Then came another flash, another report, the sound of glass broken, and the lantern fell to the ground. Then a third, a loud German cry and one of the pioneers fell forward shouting and complaining though it was but a grazing flesh-wound. Just behind the horses of the Staff the admirable discipline of the English armies permitted an immediate deployment of the leading company, in spite of the circumstances of darkness and of unexpected confusion; but even as they deployed all the brushwood before them was alive with a volley of guns, perhaps eighty, perhaps a hundred yards away.

By the intermittent flashes from the muzzles of their enemies the men could see a stockade of trunks laid across the road with earth beaten between, and from that stockade the fire continually poured. They answered with set volleys, but they did not advance.

The head column so checked sent a shock all down the line. Here a gun team had to be thrown out to the right, there a mounted officer reined up sharp, there again the pole of a waggon broke under the sudden swerve. Certain of the middle and rear companies bunched and huddled; a troop of the German Dragoons ran wild, their horses turning and galloping away. There was for a moment a danger possibly of anarchy, and certainly of panic. The good order of the command conjured that danger; there was an attempt of a charge. Fire upon either flank destroyed it. Then very soon the men formed round again, their head now become their rear; they turned on that road, protected by the companies that had first borne the fire, which volleyed as they retired one behind the other in sections. All was done with precision, with dignity, and with knowledge.

The night was not long spent when they had thus fallen back beyond the effect, and at last

beyond the noise, of the musketry that had intercepted them. When they reached camp again it was not dawn, but in that interlude the whole plan of the Colonial War had failed. For a week the force kept quarters within its lines. Upon the next Monday, the 13th, Burgoyne caused to be drawn up for him an account of all that remained to his contained command. There was but a week's provision, and already horses had died for lack of forage. He sent his note to the commander of the American lines, and before ten that evening he had got his answer, courteous and decisive

On the Tuesday and Wednesday the details of the sad business were determined. On Thursday, October 16, a date of repeated tragic and fatal interest to Europe (it is the date of Wattignies and of Marie Antoinette's death), the capitulation was signed. Upon the morrow the garrison piled arms and the history of the world was changed.

DROUET'S RIDE

JUNE 21, 1791

Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, King and Queen of France, attempting to fly from Paris in the midst of the Revolution, were intercepted just as they reached safety by one Drouet, who galloped near midnight by a short cut to the town of Varennes through the forest and roused the populace

DROUET'S RIDE

JUNE 21, 1791

IT was already dark. That longest day of the year had been cloudy, and though at sunset a lurid shaft of red had shone from under the edges of the cloud, the sky soon covered again and one could see no stars. In the main room of the Town House of Ste. Menehould a number of men were talking all at once, as is the French habit, and accomplishing things with an incredible rapidity. Outside the public square was filling, and though the mob as yet did not clamour, the noise from it was rising; in one place a man was struggling with a soldier, calling him a German, and the soldier was crying that it was false and that he was a Frenchman from Burgundy. In the ugly steeple which one could see squat against the night the bells rang continuously and furiously, and twice a pistol shot was heard in the darkness. All were now convinced that the carriage which had left them not an hour ago had contained the King. But with every one volunteering at once to do this and to

do that it was not until Drouet spoke with decision that the pursuit was determined on.

Drouet was by nature a silent man; tall, and with a face like a hawk. He had long, clean legs, suitable for riding on a horse; he had the roll of the cavalry, for he had served in that arm. He went down to his stables and saddled the two horses by lantern-light, and so went riding out with his companion. The crowd gathered round him; as he came to the limit of the town he got free of them, and immediately broke into a gallop down the Clermont road. They listened to the distant beat of the hoofs, expecting the trot or the walk when he took the rise into Argonne, but they did not hear it. Even in its utmost faintness, and before the noise of the ride was lost in the distance, it was still a gallopade and a rhythmical pounding through the night.

Over the crest of the hill and down into the steep and muddy ravine where the mountain village of Islettes, dirty and clumped, squats by the brook-side, they galloped on, waking for one moment the villagers as they passed with the furious clatter of iron from the heavy hoofs of the posting horses; and again, after they had passed, there was heard that distant fading of the gallopade, for the long flat rise before them did not check their course. But just

as they approached its summit in a place where the great trees of Argonne line the road upon the right, and upon the left are separated from it by nothing but a narrow strip of mead (where to-day the railway runs), there mixed with the noise of the hoof-beats beneath them the noise of a distant hail. They drew rein, and very soon tall riding figures loomed up in the night upon the skyline of the hill-top before them, and when they hailed again, Drouet recognised his own grooms. The groups mingled, and to the panting of the two strained beasts, the occasional pawing of the tired post-horses of the others, the story of the coach was rapidly told. It was on two miles ahead, rolling rapidly to Neuville, and so to Varennes. It was bewildering news, for all Ste. Menehould had thought that the King's flight was to Metz. And in a moment the active mind that lay behind the close-set eyes of Drouet seized the tactics of that night upon which depended the fate of the Capetian Monarchy, and of all Europe too. The coach had doubled. Its start upon him was too great to be caught up by following the road; they would be at Varennes and screened by a belt of soldiery before he could ride them down. He must—it was his one opportunity—plunge across the base of that triangle and head the fugitives; but this

short cut lay not even over fields or common, it lay through the immense forest of Argonne and the high tangled ridge of the hill. He had, across such country, not an hour before him, and more than eleven miles to cover. He leapt the ditch, he crossed the meadow, he took the thick of the trees on his left, and urged his mount by a direct threading of the undergrowth, until he came to the summit whence proceeds the long line of the hills. For that short mile only was the sound of the hoof-beats hushed and time lost in necessity of walking his horse. At the summit an alley opened before him ; he struck spurs and galloped furiously down again.

He was so native to Champagne that he knew what none but the countryfolk know, and what indeed no historian has discovered, that an old track lay along the summit of the hill, open through the dense growth of trees, dry from its situation on the ridge, with here and there a fallen trunk or a hummock of ground to imperil one, but still a road of a kind. It is of immense antiquity ; the Gauls have used it, and the Romans, but the forest has grown up round its southern end ; it comes up blindly against the undergrowth and leads nowhere. It had had no purpose in the history of the nation during all that thousand years in which

the great edifice of the French Monarchy had risen to the benefit of mankind; and now this deserted and haunted lane in the wood was the instrument by which that Monarchy was destroyed.

Down it and down it, mile after mile, the horses thundered. The night wore on, and from the distant steeples of the villages in the plain beneath the half-hour struck; a couple of miles away down on the plain, and parallel to Drouet's riding, ran the straight high road, and on it, still rolling ahead, but gained on with every bound of the cavalryman's horses, went the berline and the destiny of the Bourbons.

The riders came to a place where years before murder had been done, and where a great white stone had been set by the peasantry, who dread the powers of evil that haunt such spots. This stone was Drouet's mark, for here there branches from the ridgeway a narrow and foul path which leads downwards on to the Varennes road, and strikes that road just as it issues from the forest and at the gate of the little town. By this way alone can a man on horseback get from the high ridgeway down to the plain, unless indeed he is to go all the way round and strike the main road through the pass which lies a mile or two ahead. This turning alone could accomplish Drouet's purpose,

and even so the issue was very near. The hardest pace might fail to head the berline, and he might have ruined his mount and clattered into Varennes too late. They galloped and they galloped on, till the woods suddenly ceased upon either side. They heard beneath them the setts of the high road, and immediately saw before them such lights as still shone from the higher windows of Valmy. The clock was striking the hour. Drouet dismounted: wisely, for in the tortuous streets of the little place and with the business before him he was freer on the foot than in the saddle.

The whole place was silent. One would have said that no one watched. The sluggish river slipping between the piles of the bridge was the only sound. He ran breathlessly up the High Street. Between him and the archway that crossed clean over it up the hill there was not a human being nor light, save at one door, from which light streamed, and in which a group of men were talking—politics of course, for it was a tavern; but of the coach, of soldiers, even of the horses for the change, not a sign. He thought for a moment that he had failed. He dashed into the tavern and asked if a berline had rolled by. The stolid people of these hills looked at him rather stupidly, wondering what he meant. But he was known, and they answered

him. Nothing had been heard, nothing had been seen. Then Drouet for the first time in that night of thundering hoofs and riding saw the conclusion of his plan. He told them that in the coach was the King. Such time as it took, not to convince them, but to get the mere fact into their heads, was wasted; but soon they had understood or believed; they rose, they scattered, one man to raise the militia, another to find the Mayor, a third to arm himself. As for Drouet, he went out into the air of the street, could see nothing at first for the glare of the light, waited a moment till his eyes should be accustomed to the darkness, then rapidly breasted the hill, keeping close upon the houses. And suddenly, before he quite knew it, there was the berline right on him, a huge mass of leather and of packages and of humanity within and without, girding on its brakes and sliding down the stone of the street. His work was done, and the doom of the Monarchy was accomplished.

THE GUNS AT VALMY

SEPTEMBER 21, 1792

The allied Prussian and Austrian armies advancing against a French force of little military value, easily turned its position and were within striking distance of Paris, there to put an end to the Revolution; when, in turning to destroy the French force left behind them after this turning movement, they met with a check due to the rapid artillery fire of the French from the plateau of Valmy. This slight interference with the elaborate Prussian plans threw such confusion into the allied armies as soon necessitated a retreat which changed the history of the world

THE GUNS AT VALMY

SEPTEMBER 21, 1792

BROKEN by long marching through intolerable driving rain, a welter of seasoned and unseasoned men, twenty thousand strong, they went through the empty and mournful spaces that make up the plains beneath the hills of Argonne. It is a dreary land of little sluggish rivers, bubbling up in marshes and oozing to the Marne: little deserted villages which no man knows, and through the entrance of it one great royal road which for two thousand years has been the road of invasion and defence for Gaul. Here also Attila had been crushed and Europe saved.

It was pitch dark, the rebels and the traitors (who were many) had their grumbling washed out of them by the long misfortune and fatigue, by the dreadful rumours that the main army had been completely defeated, by the days and days of retreat, and by the bewildering counter-orders. The young volunteers, broken with the weight of their equipment, were cursing the folly of their

enthusiasm and the war and the nation and the rest of it. The baggage-train was encumbered with a herd of useless men, of whom those who still could walk held painfully to the carts for assistance; and over all this long serpent of men a brutal discipline alone maintained the bond of unity.

There was a further note of doom. Kellerman, their General, had blundered and began to know that he had blundered. He ought half an hour before to have reached Gizancourt, upon its height which dominates the lesser heights called "the Moon," so that if Gizancourt was held, "the Moon" (which was called so from the sign of its inn) could not be held. But no lights showed through the wet, no loom of houses stood out in the darkness. In a moment he was still further bewildered to find himself crossing the great road; he made up his mind to halt at the first moment. He did so, when, not an hour later, the head of his column had shambled into the village of Valmy, a dirty hamlet with a great gaunt windmill, showing darker against the darkness of the sky. There, as the column halted, positions were taken, and the drenched men slept upon a line of three miles and more, and in that night some died.

With the next morning the rain had ceased, but

a dense mist covered everything. Men moved like ghosts in the despairing dawn, and the notes of the "Diane" to which the French awake were muffled in the fog. When it was broad daylight Kellerman attempted to repair his error. It was considerable. There was no retreat from the position; for reinforcements to reach him from Dumouriez upon his right the only approach was a tiny narrow road picking its way through the marsh, a road on which cavalry would go single file, and on which it was impossible to move a gun. Up in Argonne behind him on the high road the Irishman, who with his eight thousand was desperately holding the single pass, was separated from him by a lake and treacherous ground. With such force and after such a blunder it is probable that Kellerman despaired, but he was far too great a soldier to allow such a mood to clothe itself with action: his first order was to send out a force with light artillery and ample cavalry that should take up the position he should have reached the night before. Even as he gave the order he heard that the enemy had passed Hans; that at any moment they might have their guns emplaced upon the heights of "the Moon," with no force at Gizancourt to annoy them. There was a race for it in the thick fog, and at about eight o'clock in the morning, as each was

wondering how far his opponents might be, the forces came in contact; long before the French had attained their object the Revolution had lost that all-important handicap, and the force Kellerman had thrown out retired.

The mist rose; there succeeded to it a cold drizzle, but a slight one, through which the landscape was quite plain; and the French in their long irregular line saw over the little valley the full body of the Allies. From the Austrians far off on the north it ran down in masses of men of changing uniform and nationality to where at its southern extremity Brunswick and the King of Prussia led the veterans of Frederick. There was no movement. The armies regarded each other, and then suddenly their anger spoke in a furious cannonade, and all the weight of metal was with the invaders.

It was a sustained and triumphant fire, which terrified and broke the loose formations opposed to it, and which, though it did not silence the French batteries, unnerved that inchoate group which huddled round the mill at Valmy. They had not actually broken, but they were in confusion, individuals seeking cover, the horses plunging, many riderless, the guns half served, when a sound much louder even than the thunder of the field-pieces crashed among them, and where the

limbers stood wheel to wheel by the mill door the flame of an explosion went up and completed the disaster. Then Brunswick charged.

Kellerman called for a new horse (his own had been shot in the last fury of the cannonade), and as the Prussian columns formed for the advance he took the last desperate remedy, odious to soldiers, and consented to appeal to forces other than those upon which sober generalship can calculate and can decide. Here were his young men, all to pieces from two hours' shelling; there opposite tall Grenadiers whose elders could remember the drawn face and the Quixotic, passionate and glorious leadership of the Hohenzollern, were upon them. Here were the young men with nothing but the memories in them (fast fading after so much rain) of the delirium for "freedom," for a word; the young men who hitherto had felt no shock and who had no wall but lost their souls in an artillery hell; upon them, slowly in the long three columns, were approaching those invincible men who had for so long been a model to the soldiers of Europe. In front of the young men Kellerman rode, all along the line, looking into their faces. There were a few faint cheers; they grew somewhat louder, then smiling he took his plumed hat off his handsome head and waved it, suddenly

drew his sword, waved it before them too, and called for cheers for the nation. The three columns were at the base of the slope, the first refusing with the old Prussian oblique tactic, the second and the third advancing, one overlapping the other. In a few moments the shock would come. There was no sound of guns ; the Prussian fire had ceased in order to permit the charge ; the French fire was deliberately retained. But on the crest to which the Prussian infantry was advancing eighteen pieces stood converging in a crescent, their teams untouched, their matches lit, and the Major who commanded them watching like a man who watches before unleashing a hound.

The cheers for the nation grew louder ; they became general, and a movement of strengthening and formation ran along the line. It stiffened, and the silence helped it to prepare. Then, long after the heads of the Prussian columns had entered within range of the lesser guns, when they were all but in range of musket fire, the commander of the crescent of batteries lifted his hand, and the eighteen pieces crashed iron into the Grenadiers. The columns wavered, but they kept formation, and their ponderous advance continued. As it continued all those guns, those eighteen guns, firing not now together but at will, racing one

against the other as it were for rapidity and for a gunnery prize, fired and fired, and almost as loud as their firing came from the infantry line a fury of cheers; for the guns had worked in the hearts of the volunteers, and perhaps of the rebels too, that miracle of emotion which upon one occasion and another has been the arm of God for the salvation of French land. It was near noon and the sense of doom was lifted, for the columns had halted at last and they had not gained the hill. They still kept formation with that magnificent German tenacity which was and is their pride, but they had turned face about, and only covering sections faced the French line, and these also were soon retired.

From that moment Europe was transformed.

It was a very small thing; so small that to this day no historian can fully explain its vast consequence. The King of Prussia was in his great-coat, watching the thing through glasses, and blaming Brunswick for playing the fool with too small a force, and for too much despising those wastrels of the Jacobins. The French Princes, who had no coats, were shivering in the wet, and very freely complaining that the King of Prussia might have lent them his. Brunswick, the sanest and also the broadest of the governing minds upon

those heights of "the Moon," was pondering whether it was possible to advance in force and risk annihilation (for the Irishman still held the pass with his eight thousand, and a reverse that day, though slight, would mean starvation upon the morrow—with those tortuous communications through the North); Clairfayt was urging that the Austrians should be given their chance; and young Goethe, watching the whole affair, and already knowing profoundly the minds of men, decided in his heart that the turning-point in history had come and passed.

At four the Austrians had their way. They also failed. A fitful exchange of distant shots, lobbed from now one cannon, now another, accompanied the decline of the light, and as the evening darkened rarer and rarer flashes discovered the emplacement of random guns. By seven all was silent and it was night.

MR. BARR'S ANNOYANCE

OCTOBER 16, 1793

Marie Antoinette, formerly Queen of France, was executed just after midday on October 16, 1793. *Negotiations for the import of American grain into France (then suffering from war and famine) were being conducted by the Revolutionary Government. An American agent is here supposed suffering an adventure on that day*

MR. BARR'S ANNOYANCE

OCTOBER 16, 1793

MR. BARR of Philadelphia had risen at six o'clock in his room of the Hotel of the Golden Fleece, in the Rue Richelieu, upon October 16, 1793. He was ignorant of the French language, but this ignorance did not disturb his even and somewhat taciturn though genial mind. He had come to Paris upon business which he knew would be lucrative, and which he hoped he might conduct without too great a strain upon that code of morality which he held in common with Penn, the founder of his commonwealth. His clothes were neat, orderly, and rich, but not expansive in colour; they were of a puce, nearly black it was so dark, and were of one hue in every part of his garments. His shoes, which were buckled with silver plate, his cane, which had a fine golden top or knob, the heavy bunch of seals at his fob, and the lace which showed at his stock proved him to be a man of means; but his wig, though it was carefully tied, was undoubtedly provincial. His

round and rubicund face was not ungenerous; but he was stout, and perhaps fifty years of age. I should add that he was unmarried, although his wife (if he had had one) would take no part in his present adventure, yet it enables one to see him more clearly when one knows that he was a bachelor.

There were many things which Mr. Barr disliked in the Gaul. He had landed but three days before, but he already disliked the French villages, he disliked the shrill French voices, and though he had come into Paris too late in the evening to see anything but a few dingy oil-lamps swinging above wet and deserted streets, he was sure he would be out of mood with the city; but he bore his disappointment with the tenacity of the Republican he was, and fixed his mind as steadily as might be upon the thought of his appointment which was at noon with a clerk of the Government in the Garde Meuble. He was as good as promised an order for the shipment of grain, and every time he thought of it his quiet and well-composed mind became slightly but perceptibly gayer.

Mr. Barr threw open the windows. He detested the French stuffiness, the French alcove beds, and the heavy French curtains. He looked out into what he would have called, with no great

originality, "God's fresh air." It was already light, and from this casement, which looked eastward, Mr. Barr could see a confused mass of roofs over the empty expanse of the Palais Royal. Upon these was falling a steady and disheartening drizzle from an undeterminate dull sky. Mr. Barr heard with curiosity the cries of the street vendors below, he looked with not a little dread down the great height which lay between his window-bar and the ground. He determined that he would spend the time between his breakfast and noon in perambulating this famous city, and hoped he should have time to discover one or two of the spots he had seen mentioned in his news-sheet at home as being connected with the Reformation, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the successful voyage of the great Franklin.

When, therefore, Mr. Barr had eaten a very large beefsteak (procured for him with difficulty and cooked with a still greater difficulty at such an hour), he went out into the narrow street and turned southward a little vaguely to see what he might see.

There was not much doing in Paris on that morning; the drizzle seemed to keep many people indoors, and even as he went through the labyrinth of little streets which occupied the courtyard

of the Louvre he had but little sightseeing for his pains. He did, indeed, stop a moment to look curiously at a sentry in a tattered uniform with a greasy red cap upon his head and a sheepish look in his eye, but as he saw that the sentry resented so close an inspection Mr. Barr very politely continued his slow perambulation.

He crossed the river, spent quite half an hour watching the workmen upon the new bridge beyond the Tuileries Gardens, sauntered, more than ever unoccupied, through the lanes of the University, was annoyed to be jeered at by a group of little boys, recrossed the river, visiting the spot where Henry IV. had been stabbed, and then, finding by his fat watch that it was over half-past ten, he thought it high time to turn westward and get him by the Rue St. Honoré toward the Garde Meuble, for among Mr. Barr's dislikes was all hurry, confusion and noise. It was therefore unfortunate that as he came down a narrow street that debouched near the disused Oratorian Church (where he had intended to spend a few moments of pious reflection before the House of Coligny) he heard arising from the Rue St. Honoré before him an offensive clamour, more unpleasant in his estimation than any of the other unpleasant things he had come across among these very dis-

appointing people—to whom, however, he was forced to admit he owed much of his glorious independence from the British Crown. Much at the same moment that this noise offended him he heard in his rear a sharp rush of feet, and was swept down towards the Rue St. Honoré by a new contingent of the mob which was pouring from everywhere into that thoroughfare like rivulets feeding a torrent in spate.

Mr. Barr was too stout and too courageous a man to be swept off his feet. He resisted a little angrily; his resistance caused one of the mob to let drive at him with his fist, but the blow falling short no further harm was done him, and, indeed, the pre-occupation of the crowd was too great to allow for a quarrel. As they ran and dragged him along with them they often went tip-toe, craning their necks and giving excited cries which Mr. Barr completely failed to understand.

So surrounded and so driven, Mr. Barr found himself at last wedged tight into a mass of men and women who packed the Rue St. Honoré so that one could move forward but at a crawling pace, and from the mass so wedged and so slowly proceeding went forth a cleaseless roar, the like of which Mr. Barr had never heard save once in a

September gale upon his recent voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.

At the head of the great mob, and so close to Mr. Barr that he could almost have touched them, went a squad of soldiery as ungainly and tattered as the sentinel whom he had watched that morning; nay, they had not even a common uniform nor an attempted one; not one was shaven, not one completely buttoned, and Mr. Barr noted with acute irritation that the shoes of some were actually missing! Such confused thoughts as ran in his mind in the midst of all this babel were a general surmise that this nation (which he knew to be at war) would at once and inevitably suffer an overwhelming defeat. Meanwhile the squad of soldiers in front of him and the long line that loosely held each side of the street continued to impress him less and less favourably and to add to the already considerable discomfort this misadventure caused him. He twice managed to elbow a few inches' space and so to consult his watch, though furtively, for he feared it might be stolen. He was very seriously offended to find that it lacked but half an hour of his appointment; but needs must, and he shuffled along foot by foot with the procession which he involuntarily headed, now and then shrinking back as best he could

when one of the ragged brutes in front of him menaced him with the butt of his musket and cursed him for pressing forward.

It was not until he had been in this situation for some ten minutes that Mr. Barr, who was a short man, appreciated the cause of the commotion. Beyond the squad of soldiery, and showing above their heads, he saw the upper part of a priest's figure, and close to it the upper half of the figure of a seated woman, while showing still higher and standing listlessly beside her was a tall, stout, crop-headed fellow, hatless, and holding loosely in his hand a rope, the other end of which was tied to the woman's pinioned wrists behind her back. He saw by their motion and their eminence that they must all three be in some sort of cart.

In this group, the source and meaning of the whole business, Mr. Barr took but little interest, though he at once perceived that he had got into a criminal business of some kind, and that here was a prisoner being led to prison or perhaps to punishment. He had no intention of remaining in Paris, and his returning energies as noon approached were concentrated upon escaping if possible from the crowd by a side street, and that without injury to himself or delay for his appointment. But though he felt so little interest he could but

watch the woman's face whenever a movement in the soldiers in front of him gave him an opportunity.

That face was ashen, emaciated, and distraught; the eye in the profile towards him was dull and blind, like the eye of some old spent creature; a few grey hairs escaped from beneath her cap; they were damp, short and rare, contrasting meanly with the white and newly starched head-dress; she bent forward from her neck and shoulders, and it would indeed have been hard to say whether she was animate or inanimate. She seemed not to hear the voice of the crowd, and the priest sitting opposite to her had ceased even his perfunctory gestures, so irresponsive was her face and form. All around this dumb show and hideous, from the crowd, from windows of the tall houses, from the very air, as it seemed, shouts and curses perpetually rang—when suddenly Mr. Barr of Philadelphia saw his opportunity.

They had just passed the house of Robespierre, and the pressure at the head of the column was relieved by a movement in the mob which halted to cheer the Tribune; a free space of a yard or two was at once formed between the column of the populace and the still advancing tumbril with its ragged guard. Through that space with somewhat undignified speed Mr. Barr darted to the left, and

dodging through a line of soldiers found himself in the little lane which flanks the Garde Meuble.

Now he was inside the great doors, a little flushed, but walking with recovered dignity up the stone stairs of that palatial office; now he was ushered with becoming ceremony into the secretary's room.

Even here he suffered a last annoyance; these unbusinesslike and gimcrack people were gathered, clerks and secretary and all, at the tall windows that overlooked the Place de la Révolution, and it was with difficulty he could attract their attention. Even when he had done so, they would not leave the panes.

They had some excuse; they also were watching that tumbril, but they knew, what he did not, that the fainting woman seated there was the Queen.

GORNAY

JUNE 1794

Among the prisoners executed at the end of the Terror was a young cavalryman, Gornay, whose name was not upon the list of the condemned, though upon that of the imprisoned. It is not known how the error was committed nor why its victim did not protest

GORNAY

JUNE 1794

IT was June and very hot; it was the hotter because the inner courtyard of the Conciergerie got no air from above or below. It was like a well of old, unpleasant stone marked all the way up by narrow windows, the lower storeys of which were barred and the last of which only just showed above the flag-stones of the pavement. There was a drowsiness in the air, which came from the early summer heat, but under the eaves high above could still be heard in this early month the twittering of birds. There still lingered also something fresh in the happy blue of the sky, the little patch of sky which a man could catch by standing near the broad window of the cell and gazing upwards.

Within that cell were perhaps a dozen assembled.

The prisons of the Revolution were but passages from a Life to a Life. They had about them none of the appurtenances which go with the verdict of regular and therefore hypocritical tribunals. The names of those batches of the doomed were

spelt hurriedly and ill, or sometimes not at all. The victims themselves entered, and remained, in their civilian dress; they spent their time in human companionship; they ate such food as their purses could provide them, nor were they subjected to inhuman regulations or to inhuman apathy.

The prisoners in this cell were very various in kind. A long, low and solid deal table ran down the length of the room; its trestles grated, as men leant against it, along the stone floor. Beside it ran a bench as rough and as strong. The dark, high walls were damp with the moisture of prisons. A crucifix had been hung upon a nail at one end, and near the window a woman had stretched a rosary upon two nails. The emblems seemed to some meaningless, to one or two ridiculous, to the rest a mitigation of the memory of death.

And yet, as in any other room full of prisoners in that June morning, but few were sure of dying. Of all the multitude of those whom the Terror held, upon suspicion or to save the Republic from spying, or to prevent the forging of money by the enemy, or for any other reason, those that at last were led out of the door into the sunlight and to death were a minority. But there was this about that fantastic time: that the forms of law were so

hurried, the sequence of political accident so tumultuous, that no man felt any kind of security, even in his written sentence; some, clearly condemned and having had their sentence read to them and having gone through the sweat of the agony, fantastically survived; others, thinking no doubt that the key had turned upon them only for a few hours, untried, uncondemned by some misspelling or some accident of the pen, might hear their names called out upon the daily list. These last were not very many; in all those four months during which martial law ground and made even the face of the Republic, in all the prisons not much more than a thousand perished. But the tantalisation and, as it were, the gamble of death was over the whole city within the prisons and without. For if a man sent money to his son hiding in some German town he, the father, died. And if a peasant held back corn from the armies for a rise in price, he also died.

This room full of prisoners, I say, was very mixed. Three boasted that they were noble—but there were half a million nobles in France, and these three were very threadbare nobles. One was a Breton who had helped an orthodox priest to escape; he sat there foolishly smiling, unable to speak their tongue. He was dressed in broad

knickerbockers and had fine metal buttons upon his coat, and in his hat there were gay ribbons. Another was an apothecary, for long the chief Jacobin of a country town, but one who had most undoubtedly bought corn with coin to sell it for assignats to the regiments as they marched through, and then again to turn the paper into metal; a court-martial had condemned him to be sent to Paris, and there the tribunal had dealt with him; he was to die. He was a little wizened man, over sixty years of age, one who had never known religion and who had lost all dignity of life, and the thought of death was intolerable to him. He sat in the corner most remote from the light, upon a rickety chair, biting his nails and looking over his hand, like an animal with bright eyes.

The rest of the group were gathered together, talking without vivacity of this thing and of that, and even of what fate might be before the one or the other.

To these, then, on the stroke of noon and while the hour was still sounding from the great clock upon the corner tower, entered a young man quite distinct from any other who had come into that prison before. His face was clean and ruddy, his stature considerable, his limbs were large, strong, straight and well held, his gait easy and his

manner altogether not only that of a soldier but of a soldier who for many months had lived in the open air.

He was from the eastern frontier, and, as it seemed, from Lorraine; his hair was of a warm yellow, and the something German in his face was relieved by the vivacity and irony of his eyes. His uniform, which was still left upon him, brightened all his way, but as he walked he missed some balancing thing, which was his sword. For as he passed the gates of the prison his sword had been taken from him.

He bowed to them and said:

"My name is Gornay."

No one answered him except the one woman in the place, and she, though she bowed in return, was too jaded with sorrow to speak to any new-comer. He continued: "My name is Gornay. It is well that you should know it, for I was a Hussar and may be a Hussar again." Then, as they still kept silent, shrinking from this grotesque advent of sunlight and of air, he added:

"Gentleman, for a pack of prisoners you seem to me uncommon doleful; and but for this lady I should say I had no hosts at all in this particular hotel."

At that time smoking was unusual save among

the poor, but this new-comer, who was not a gentleman but a private soldier, badly felt the need of it. He pulled some coarse tobacco out of his tight trouser-pocket and rolled it in a dirty scrap of paper which he found upon the bench beside him. He pulled out a tinder-box, and then with elaborate courtesy he asked, as he might have asked in the barrack-room, whether he had leave to smoke.

His hostess bowed. She had never smelt tobacco smoke close by in her life, and she wished to know the smell of it. As for the apothecary, for all that his mind was intent upon approaching death, he growled and refused.

Gornay very politely hesitated to light his little twist.

"Go on, my lad; go on," said the woman in a very sweet and patronising voice. (Outside she had been a milliner and knew the manners of the great.)

"But if this gentleman objects?" said Gornay, and the apothecary muttered evilly that he did not object.

Then Gornay lit his cigarette, and, blowing out a very miserable little line of smoke, he pretended to an immense satisfaction.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I wonder if life has anything better than this?"

In their reading, before their trials the Parisian prisoners at least had been used to such affected paradox, and they did not even deign to answer now that they were in the very presence of reality. But the apothecary said to him with a scowl:

"For what are you condemned?

Gornay answered in the frankest tone in the world and with the brightest smile: "Upon my soul, I cannot tell. And for what were you?"

"Upon my soul I will not," the apothecary muttered.

"At any rate," said Gornay, as lightly as though he were keeping up the conversation in a play, "one has this advantage in revolutions, that one knows it was nothing very disgraceful; you were not a usurer, I suppose? you committed no murder, I take it? and I very much doubt your burning down a house, even though it were your own." As he said this he blew out the smoke again with something of a suspicion of insolence, and then suddenly tapped his older companion upon the shoulder and said:

"Be comforted. In a revolution every man's honour is safe, and there are splendid opportunities of dying."

The narrow corridor outside echoed to another step than that of the monotonous turnkey, who

paced up and down it for his living under the light of a small and evil-smelling lamp.

The new step was at once heavy and rapid ; it was a step of which they all had read or heard. Some braced themselves to meet it by an iron indifference. The woman felt so ill that she could hardly stand, but such was the dignity of her sex that, clenching her hand and leaning upon the table with it, and turning her face from the light, she was not humiliated by any physical failure. Only the poor apothecary man, the money-dealer, went to pieces at that sound. He bit, no longer his nails, but the ends of his fingers, and he made a little whining noise with his throat. Gornay the while was beginning a story of what death felt like when it was near one in action, a moment which, soldier-like, he affected to know, but which, in truth, he did not know at all.

The key was in the door and in the poor old apothecary's eyes there stood two large cold tears. Such colour as had been there completely left his forehead, his temples, and his cheeks, and gathered under his eyes, and his mouth was most unpleasantly drawn. But Gornay was still Gornay. He bent down almost kindly like a son and said :

" What is your name ? "

The old man said : " It is no use."

Gornay answered: "It is evident that you have never answered a roll-call." Then he said again: "What is your name?"

'Braz," said the old man, but he whispered it from so dry a throat that one could hardly hear it.

Gornay, as though he had met a traveller upon a road, said genially:

"A Gascon, by God!'

The door opened, and the officer with the written list in his hand began to read:

"*Perac, demoiselle.*"

"*Manzon fils.*"

The woman could just move, and she moved forward. A man came after.

"*Kernouel.*'

The foolish Breton smiled and moved hearing his name. They hustled him into line.

The reader murmured down a list of names, ticking off those awaiting him in other rooms, and calling aloud the remaining names in this, till he came to the last, and sang out:

"*Braz.*'

Then Gornay, from the table on which he had been half-seated, rose, put his hand upon the shoulder of the old apothecary to prevent his moving, and came into line with the rest. Just as they led the four through the door, and while the

apothecary was looking on, hardly understanding what had happened, the turnkey said harshly to that soldier :

" There is no smoking here ! "

And Gornay, with more regret than he had yet shown, threw the cigarette down and trod upon it carefully, and having done so marched on much more mournfully, with the desire of tobacco strong upon him.

This is the way that Gornay died, and why he was so anxious for death, or rather so avid of it, has never been determined.

THERMIDOR

JULY 1794

A Committee of the Revolutionary Parliament was chosen in the worst crisis of the war with Europe to be dictator and administer martial law. Robespierre, the idol of the moment, was nominally a member, but his love of popularity interfered with the desire of each of the others to make his own department (War, Finance, &c.) workmanlike. He came more and more rarely, at last only to ask for favours for protégés, and finally the Committee determined to be rid of him and he fell from power

THERMIDOR

JULY 1794

THE year had turned, and though the heat increased, the shortening of the day was already apparent; the morning broke more tardily; its slow approach was noted in the great room upon the ground floor of the Pavillon de Flore.

The Committee had been sitting through the night: little chinks of daylight had just begun to show where the tall curtain met and in the joints of the huge gilded shutters, and the new light contrasted with the yellow candles in their silver, standing upon and reflected in the polished wood of the great table.

There were other candles than these. Two were set upon the floor where a great spread of maps was pinned down to the waxed chestnut wood, and there sprawling at full length was the ungainly form of Carnot, fixing little flags at one place and another. He grasped in one view, as he lay there planning, what not Jourdon nor any

other upon the frontier could seize, the whole line of the defence, or rather (for it had now come to this) of the victorious advance which was not to be checked until the Grand Army should have shredded into retreat from Moscow.

Carnot lay there sprawled at full length, moving now one of his candles, now the other, to read a name or fix some detail of the Ardennes. His odd, somewhat mishappen head, with its high bulging forehead and scanty black hair falling down in a wisp towards his eyes, looked the more grotesque from the shadows these candles cast. Every now and then he murmured to himself as he wrote a note upon the margin of the map or followed some natural feature with his finger

There was no other sound save the scratching of pens. Round the great table, jaded with so many hours of continuous labour, still sat the Committee. The freshest and the most carefully dressed was the cleanly Barrère. He was writing. Couthon, pinched and ill, was writing also; so were three others to his left. Only one was not writing; the boy St. Just, with eyes like Shelley's, but more firm, sat back a little in his chair and looked at no one of his companions but into darkness. His eyes were filled either with memories

that troubled him or with the fear of some approaching doom.

The day continually broadened. It was still cool in the July morning and the window, facing westward, got no gleam of sunlight; but the cessation of the songs of birds in the gardens showed that the sun had risen, and in a little while Barrère, dropping his pen, stood up, stretched his arms, made some exclamation of boredom, walked to the curtains and pulled them aside, going round as he did so to avoid treading on these great maps of Carnot's, upon whose intent, ungainly figure he looked down as he passed, half in amusement and half in admiration. When the curtains were drawn and the shutters thrown open, light so flooded into the room that the candles lost their office. They were blown out. Carnot rose and came to the table. It was full day. In the sudden change from one condition to another, as by a shock, all work ceased and they looked at one another wondering to see what an extreme fatigue was upon every face.

Barrère had before him a little agenda scribbled upon half a sheet of paper and he first spoke. He said: "We cannot continue much longer. I must sleep before the debates begin, and none of you will be fit to defend the policy unless you also

rest. We do not know who may be called on." There was a gloomy and a silent assent from all except from Couthon and from St. Just. The little refined cripple and the boy knew well enough what that policy was, but it was at the peril of their lives to oppose it or to seem to oppose it: it was the policy that would kill Robespierre, their friend. Each waited, the cripple in fear, the boy in anxiety, for the first question that might be addressed to them. Each wondered how he should reply to it, whether to pretend connivance with the ruin of their leader or to profess ignorance of a design against him. They dared not argue against the scheme that was afoot, still less would they dare to vote against it if it should come to a vote. Luckily for them the silence was broken not by any question addressed to either of them, but by the harsh Cevenol voice of Jean Bon. Alone of the eager men who made up that little assembly, he showed in his face something that betrayed a profound evil in the mind. It was an expression full at once of secrecy and of hatred.

It had been determined in the Committee that Robespierre should fall. His popularity was an obstruction to their functions. His rule of opinion clashed with their physical and actual powers; his phantasm of government with their true

executive. Couthon and St. Just alone were his friends upon that Board. Barrère officially, Carnot with the natural impatience of a soldier and of a creative mind, one for one reason and one for another, but all for reasons of statesmanship, had determined that the man must go. Not so Jean Bon. With him there was the personal malice of the less against the greater. It was the opportunity of a personal revenge that put light into his small, dark and cunning eyes and tightened his thin lips.

Jean Bon had just begun to speak when, without warning, not announced—for no stranger was permitted there—the door opened and Robespierre himself walked in.

He had not slept any more than had the others. He had spent the night in writing a defence which he knew would be needed, but upon his high-boned, set face the traces of fatigue were less evident than in those of his colleagues; and the extreme care of his dress, the glistening silver upon his shoes, the refinement of his hands lent a sort of freshness and vigour to his person, coming in as he did, after that long night sitting, upon men who had been in each other's company for more than twelve hours. In spite of that vigour every man present felt the chasm between himself and them. At the best

they saw him but rarely. They had but a moment before been his judges. They were prepared to condemn again when he should be gone.

He took the only empty chair of the ten, laid his little cane upon the table, and next against it a brown note-book that he had been carrying in his hands; then avoiding the eyes of all of them, except for one rapid but fixed look at the troubled expression of St. Just, he said that he had come upon immediate business, that he would not interrupt their labours, that his morning until the debates opened was already full of engagements. His business was, he said, to remove the names of two men from a list of the condemned they had drawn up.

They did not ask him where he had learned what was upon the list. They knew well enough that though he had not been among them for days St. Just was his regular informer. The great sheet of foolscap lay in front of Barrère. It had lain there for more than a day. Certain names had been deleted; one or two added. The signatures of a quorum alone remained to be affixed before this batch of twenty or so should be sent to their trial in the Palais.

Barrère negligently, as though it were a daily matter like any other, pushed the sheet of fools-

cap to where Robespierre sat with his carefully powdered hair, his dapper blue coat and exquisite linen. As he so pushed, Barrère glanced furtively but quickly at Carnot, and Carnot returned his glance.

Robespierre drew the paper deliberately towards him, put on his spectacles, steadied it with the little delicate fingers of either hand as though to smooth it out or hold it down, and let his sad grey eyes wander down the list. Then, thoughtfully enough, he took from the fob of his silk waistcoat a little pencil cased in gold; he drew the pencil slowly through two names. When he had done this he pushed the document back again to Barrère.

"Let me see the list," said Carnot in the same tone, with the same carelessness as you would use upon some small detail of an order. As he saw the list he shook his powerful eccentric head slowly from side to side. "It can't be done," he said. "It is necessary for the defence of the frontier. I was myself at pains to see that they should be sent back from the front." Barrère, when he had hesitated a little, added, looking at Robespierre somewhat awkwardly: "I think Carnot must have his way. It is his own department."

St. Just began to speak and then was silent. He

tapped the table with his fingers. If he had dared he would have told Robespierre to give way with as good a grace as possible.

Meanwhile the face of Robespierre was, to whatever unseen intelligences were looking on that fatal gathering, the very centre of energy in the group. It was perfectly white, save where upon his high cheek-bones a violent and feverish colour emphasised the general pallor of the rest. The veins of his temples showed as they always did when he was mastering himself for an effort of speech or of control. He said in a voice somewhat lower than was his wont, and speaking more slowly, still looking at no one directly, gazing between Carnot and Jean Bon at a carving upon the wall beyond: "You are determined to sacrifice these two men?" All the hypocrisy native to Jean Bon was called out by such a phrase. "We are sacrificing nobody, Robespierre," he said. "We are sending suspects to a fair trial." Robespierre answered "Very well!"

He put back into the fob of his silk waistcoat the little brown note-book and the gilded pencil. He took up his cane from the polished wood of the table where it lay, but his gesture with the cane betrayed the tension of his mind, for it trembled in his hand as he removed it. Then when he had

looked down a moment in silence he rose quickly and went out of the room, shutting the door behind him with a curious little *bourgeois* precision as of a well-bred provincial who knows how a gentleman should leave a drawing-room.

When he was gone Barrère laughed heartily. Carnot swore.

Jean Bon had in his eyes a more evil light than ever.

Barrère took some breadcrumbs that lay by and, still laughing, rubbed out the pencil lines that Robespierre had drawn across the names of these two obscure men. When he had done this he signed his name at the bottom of the document and pushed it up the table; Carnot signed next, Jean Bon and the rest in order. The foolscap came round to St. Just, and, without hesitation, St. Just signed it also. It came to Couthon—but Couthon, his suffering face ablaze with anger, threw down the pen before he had used it and hobbled from the room.

NAPOLEON IN THE GUADARRAMA

DECEMBER 22–23, 1808

Napoleon in Madrid, believing Sir John Moore with the English forces to be in Valladolid, and rightly judging that they must retreat at full speed to the sea through Astorga, determined to cut them off by forced marches, the first of which took place three days before Christmas 1808, *and is here described. He failed because his information was erroneous. Sir John Moore was as a fact at Sahagun, and instead of having to march two miles to Sir John's one, which he could easily achieve, success demanded four—an impossibility*

NAPOLEON IN THE GUADARRAMA

DECEMBER 22-23, 1808

THE Sierra Guadarrama stands—to the North of Madrid—not in a great wall but in a great heave like an advancing wave. One may overlook from its bare summits, which resemble those of high Scotch moorlands, vast plains to the south and to the north; these plains are treeless, arid and bare, their rare water-courses cut down deep like trenches into the friable soil. Very far away upon either horizon may be distinguished further and parallel ranges which guard, to the north the valley of the Ebro, to the south that of the Tagus.

It is a range of heights peculiar in this, that, without any abruptness of rock or savagery of precipice, though most of its slopes are easily accessible to man, and though they are more wooded, especially in their recesses, than anything in the neighbourhood beneath, something for-

bidding and austere which at times has a note of evil oppresses the spirit of a man who wanders alone in their region. Here, within two days of Christmas, in the year 1808, the army of Napoleon was forcing its way upward into the north.

They had left Madrid at morning. The straggling and squalid capital, on its high, windswept plain, was bitterly cold, and frozen dust swept in swirls down those falsely wide streets, which imitate, and foolishly imitate, in another climate and for another people, the great avenues of France. But though the cold of that morning was bitter and the frost keen, a clear sky stretched above the army; many days' rest and the comforts of the capital had given new vigour to the men. The best of guns and many of them were stretched here and there along the great line of marching, and as a core for the whole went tall in the midst the high bearskins of the Guard.

The many hours which are necessary for an army to form in column and to leave a great city had been consumed. The last of the line had left the northern gate; the royal road of the Spanish kings, the great relic of Phillip, full of the memories of the New World and of what was once a universal and an untarnished glory, stretched before them towards the hills. It was their business, leaving

the Escorial to the west, to follow on and on till they should take the heights themselves by the new and splendid way which the Bourbons had built over the mountains, and not to rest until they should have camped upon the further side.

The clear morning and the sharp air of that exalted plateau spurred them to effort; they were gay, they were prepared for miracles; the Emperor himself, who had not yet turned the corner of this life, but was still responsive to every outer impulse, tasted the wine of the weather and saw before him a complete success. The map of his whole strategy was clear and detailed in his mind. He saw the northern towns and the river valleys, the few roads, the position (as he imagined it to be) of Sir John Moore. The English at Valladolid would be hurrying back through Astorga to the sea. Their road and his would meet at Benevente; he would be at Benevente first. The officers of the cavalry laughed together and called it "the race to Benevente," and on that issue they had no doubt, for the day and the sky were vigorous above them; they were young and yet all veterans together.

But Moore, far to the northward, had other plans, and in Valladolid there were no English, and

Benevente would not be the meeting-place of battle, but of contact of escape.

So they marched northward, nearing the hills. As the head of the column reached the first roll of the mountain spurs it was seen that much of the long range to the left was dun with a mixture, as it were, of cloud and moor; for in these fantastic summits, where the skies are so different from our skies, we northerners can often watch the coming of a storm and wonder whether it is dust or haze of cloud, or our imperfect vision, that seems to make the mountains disappear into their distance, fading out of a clean outline long before their perspective has reached the horizon. To the right also, on the heights of Somosierra (which so many of the army knew from another experience), there lowered wisps of darkness, and—an ominous thing—such water as remained in the arroyos under the culverts of the great road had begun to rise higher and more turbid.

There is a village at the very foot of the ascent where the old road turns to the Escorial and the new road of the Bourbons breasts the pass. That pass is not recessed as are those across greater mountains, the Alps or the Pyrenees; it is a simple ascent, a few miles of plain steep road; the eye can follow the high road all the way to where

it overcomes the range at a saddle between two peaks 2000 ft. at the most above the starting-point from which one gazes. It is a broadway; there are no precipices or narrows; guns can take it, if they will, two abreast and cavalry by fours; or the line, if there were such a necessity, in double column. None of those perils for which soldiers are prepared in high places confronted the army, but suddenly something more terrible and more strange, which no experience of theirs had taught them to know.

The sky darkened rapidly; the gloom spread past the sun; the nearest of things was obscured: and at once from the north and the west, whistling over the edges of the range, fell driving knives of ice. In a few moments all that host was blinded and enveloped in a torment of frozen snow.

For a while it was an exhilaration to the young soldiers; they pushed into it manfully; they joked together; they sang their snatches of Gascon or Burgundian songs; and an Italian of the Piedmontese would bandy a taunt with a Provencal in some *lingua franca* of theirs, recalling the blizzards of the Alps and the winter jests of their peasants in the recesses of the Mont Genèvre.

But soon the northerners found how terrible was God south of the Pyrenees. The snow clogged

and lay; they could hardly lift their feet; their faces, first in intolerable pain and then numb, were caked and broken. Their hands upon the metal of the muskets lost their office; there were some who looked at their fingers and were astonished to see the skin torn off by the metal of the trigger guard and yet no blood issuing from the frozen flesh.

As the day advanced the storm did not abate but increased in violence. The snow deepened, the cold grew more intense, and here and there—a rare thing in the sinuous and easy bands of Napoleon—the formation was broken. Men had dropped out all along the way after the first three hours of this hell, preferring a numb death in the cold to the agony of survival. Napoleon, his will stronger than the mountains or the wind, heard their cries and saw the beginnings of their mutiny. He called a man to hold his bridle and dismounted, though painfully, from his little horse. He had ridden so far at the head of his mounted Guard; he stood by the roadside now and gave the veterans time to come abreast of him; then, with his hands clasped behind his back, he pushed on afoot side by side with them all, who went afoot also leading their horses and tramping a way for those who followed; he plunged through the deepening drifts,

his strong face level with the shoulder of some Norman giant of his Pretorians.

The fury of the sky was a challenge, and, as in a battle, victory was the sole solution for them all; there was no failing or compromise with death, unless it was to be a rout and a disaster and a full submission to the north wind.

Shots were heard close by in the driving weather, sergeants cursing and hauling, men at the spokes of the gun-carriage wheels: even a thing now, and since then, unknown in the French Service—the sound of blows. But the effort was beyond humanity. Here a gun stuck fast, there a limber found the kennel with its off wheel, sank in and overturned; and faintly through the roar of the wind or down it were threats and now and again another shot, where some lad had attempted to break away into the shelter of a barn or a grove, or where a dying fellow had taken the opportunity of such confusion for private vengeance. There were spirits among the soldiery who said it openly that this would cease if any man were bold enough to shoot the Emperor. The Emperor heard these mutineers; he did not rebuke them; he still went on, his square chin upon his breast, his sturdy legs plunging through the snow.

They came to that place where the last zigzags

of the pass begin, perhaps some 800 ft. below the summit; with an effort altogether his own, he moved on quicker than his Guards, and turning to their foremost files shouted through the gale asking them whether they remembered the conquest of the Alps that they should be conquered by the molehills of Spain. The van under this spur soon reached the stone lion that marks the highest point of the road, and the descent began. Here upon the northern side the wind, no longer gusty, was full upon them with the force and the push of a river, but the back of their task was broken; for an army upon the march is continuous, and if the head pierces through all follows.

The advance of evening on that short December day increased indeed the bitterness of the cold, but the wind abated in its fury. Corps after corps, though guns were abandoned for a moment in the drifts, though the dead and the deserters had thinned the ranks, passed the stone lion of the summit and began to stumble down the northern side. All the great host went by.

One spot upon the road the indomitable purpose of their General had fixed as the limit of their march. He would not halt hitherward of that limit save for a brief moment in a roadside hut, nor

jeopardise, in spite of all the gods of the air and the hills, this race of his to Benevente.

The evening fell ; it was dark upon the vanguard in the plain ; it was dark on the summits where the last of the waggons found an easier way from the work he had compelled the pioneers to do and the trampling of the snow by the Guard. It was full dark, but he still marched onwards. The mass of the soldiery, to whom maps are a mysterious thing, and who know nothing of a march or its goal, survived, in a full fashion, pouring through the night, tramping half dead through little villages where no halt was allowed, partly wondering and partly careless as to where repose might be found at the end. In such trials men mechanically go forward, or go forward at least till they fall ; had he taken them onwards all night through, a half at least would still have been with him at dawn.

Of the fatigue duties of that night we know nothing. Somehow the guard was set, somehow food cooked, horses groomed and watered, arms cleaned. Hour upon hour the column closed up during the night till the last of the crawling units had stumbled into the narrow street and the last of the waggons rolled in. The discipline of those armies was capable of all things ; and before the men fell into a dead sleep for the few hours before

the task should be renewed they had accomplished one of the great deeds which are of perpetual record among soldiers.

There have not been a dozen marches like that march since the Captains of Europe began to challenge one another. Yet so different is war from peace that if you will retrace that road upon an autumn evening you will come down at ease from the summits of the sierra; they will not seem very high; you will swing down a broad and easy road on to the plains of New Castile, seeing the vast horizons which the Christian conquerors saw after their first great victory over the Asiatic beyond the hills; and if you are a stout walker you will be in Madrid by evening, fatigued, and no more than fatigued.

THE BARRICADE

MAY 1871

The last three days of the suppression of the Commune consisted in charges by the Regulars against the barricades of the Communists, and among the last of these to be captured were those on the slopes of Montmartre, a high isolated hill on the extreme north of Paris overlooking the whole city

THE BARRICADE

MAY 1871

IT is not difficult to sleep during the noise of firing when one has got used to it for a few days. They had been used to it at Montmartre continuously for forty-eight hours, and before that during four long months of siege. These forty-eight hours, however, had not been steady as the war had been, but rather a succession without intermission of rifles and of guns, and the perpetual cries of men, and every kind of uproar sounding and booming in the narrow streets as the tide does when it rushes upon an angry day up the narrow gorges of the rocks.

Through a whole night of heavy firing a butcher's boy of between sixteen and seventeen had fallen asleep and had slept out under the May sky, and had wakened with the early dawn; he woke to find all silent.

He had been sleeping upon the roadway face downwards, with his head upon his crossed arms. He had drunk heavily of bad spirit the night

before, as had all but three of the men grouped about him. He staggered to his feet, and one or two of those lying around were waking also. Here in a threadbare frock-coat was a professor, with dirty linen, haggard face, and a week's growth of beard; there a nondescript lad, but of the wealthier classes, in clothes that had cost money but were very greasy and torn now, with boots that had burst long ago; a third was a plain beggar with very wild and staring eyes, with nothing on his body but blue canvas trousers, no shoes upon his feet, no coat upon his back, but a blanket huddled over him. The rest were workmen of varying degrees. There were twenty in all, for that was the number required for a barricade of such a width as theirs had, and to provide the sentries at night.

The barricade was low; it had not yet been touched by shell; it was intact save in a place where, the evening before, one furious charge of the Regulars had failed. There some of the lighter stones had slid down, and the pole of an omnibus which had been wedged into the structure lay broken. For the rest, I say, it still stood, and was excellent cover. Behind it, upon its northern side and looking down the long street that led to the plain below, a ragged sentry stood armed; the

others also took their rifles, all except one, who did not move when their elected chief called to him, nor even when they came to move him. They found he had died during the night.

A woman came out of the small shop which flanked the barricade; she was young and smiling and trim, as fresh as the early morning, and one would have said as gay; she brought coffee for them and would take no pence in exchange. Their rations of bread they already had by them, and there they sat, squatting upon the corner stones, dipping their bread in the coffee, talking little, and saying such words as they had to say in tones that were merely weary, and using oaths that had become quite conventional and thin after the use of the long war.

The sun was through the mist; the noise reminded one of traffic in the old days of peace; the noise of wheels (but they were the wheels of guns) came from the city below, and then, startling this group upon the hill, came, not half a mile away, the sharp rattle of the first fusillade. The fight had begun in the workmen's quarters, eastwards, to the left and below. But in that long street before them nothing had yet appeared; all the wooden shutters were set fast to the windows; all the iron shutters of the shop fronts were locked and

barred; there was complete silence and a complete desertion.

The place which they defended had been carefully chosen. It could not be turned save from a distance which would give ample time to fall back, and the first side street to enter that which they held was two hundred yards or more from their barricade. Out of that side street, cautiously peering round the corner, and showing at first nothing but a shoulder and an eye, came a marine. He came out fully, and carefully surveyed the barricade, the men sipping their coffee, the haggard sentry at their side. He was a Breton with high cheek-bones, and slow of thought, though quick of eye. He wished to make his report to his officer usefully and accurately. Hence he continued to note, one by one, the details of the barricade; its height, its structure, by what windows it was commanded, and the number of those who defended it. A few moments passed thus: he watching, they unconscious, when, all at once, he was seen. He himself saw the sentry's rifle suddenly come up to the shoulder. He saw it endways, and dashed back to cover behind the wall. The shot failed. Then those upon the barricade knelt at even distances and laid the barrels of their Chassepots upon the

crevices between the stones, and felt in their pockets for cartridges, loaded, and stood by. They had not long to wait. No bugle blew; in a bunch rather than a formation the company of Regulars swept round their corner into the street like men flying from a danger rather than like men approaching one; somewhat separate from them, and running a trifle faster than their foremost man, was a quite young lieutenant, his uniform so spick and span you would have thought no fighting was on, and his little toy sword gleaming sharply in the air as he cheered. Not thirty shots were fired against them as they poured up the hill, three only hit a man, but one of these shots had struck into the very centre of the charge, another had caught the lieutenant, so that even as he ran forward, and even as he still cheered, he leapt upwards and fell. There was a check just enough to admit confusion, and during that confusion the barricade steadily poured in lead; but a gap in the steady firing gave the Regulars their chance—those unpractised and lawless men behind the stones were loading all together; their fire for a few seconds was not nourished, and in just those few seconds the last yards were covered, and the rebels were swarmed upon as water swarms upon the little separate grains of sand when the tide

rises upon the beach. There was not one behind the barricade but had three men or four or five upon him (for a full company had charged), and for perhaps a minute the younger men struggled as an animal struggles against those that hold it while the others kill; the older men had at once gone down. The professor was not killed but caught; they already had torn off and bound a strip of his own linen tightly around his wrists behind his back, so that his hands were swelling out and blue with congested blood. And in the midst of all this savagery, the youngest of them was shouting as he died some screamed disjointed syllables of a chance revolutionary song. The red flag still stood above the blood of the defeat, knotted on to a tall stick planted in the stones; no one had thought to take it away. Far off up the hill two men were seen running; why, no one knows or ever will know. Whether they were the rebels, or chance comers, or whatever they were, they were dropped like rabbits, and those were the last shots fired.

* * * * *

This is the way the barricade was taken. It was still quite, quite early in the morning, the spring air was still quite pure and clean; no smoke was yet rising from those further quarters of

the city below which the Law had recovered two days before. From the moment when the marine had first taken his little look to that in which the last two shots had dropped the runaways, about five minutes altogether had passed.

So much for what happened in 1871 ; one of the hundred things that happened, each very much like all the others during that astonishing reconquest of the town. . . . But if I were to end here I should not be telling quite all the story, nor helping my readers to understand altogether the true character of these foreign men.

Exactly thirty years later, in a villa close to the River Seine, near Mantes, I dined with a man who was brother to this young lieutenant who had been killed, and there was present an old and rather decrepit gentleman of the University who had been among those upon the barricade and who had been captured ; he had been condemned to death, transported, a refugee in London, amnestied and was now still working at his mathematics in the Rue des Ecoles ; he no longer lectured, but he still gave private lessons. And these two, all during dinner, would talk of nothing else but the Commune : my host, whose brother had been hit among the Regulars during the charge, condemning it ; the aged professor, upon the other hand,

defending its ideal with all his strength. It was a heated argument. Neither understood how to reconcile party differences with the harmony of social life; for quite an hour they angrily debated the past. Later, however, they turned to talk of fishing, and it relieved me, for I am not used to political debate, nor had I ever clearly known what the Commune was all about.

THE POLITICIAN

JANUARY 11, 1906

On December 5, 1905, Mr. Balfour's Administration, which had carried to a successful and prosperous conclusion the South African War, and had admitted the Boer Republics into our Imperial system, went to the country. During the General Election following many meetings were held, and among them this, in a northern town, upon January 11, 1906

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WHAT happened on this day happened in a large hall which had been built in the beginning of our younger generation, just when iron was coming into use for building. Its architecture was of the style which may be called masonic. Sham half-columns stood against the high walls, supporting nothing ; their nondescript and hideous capitals were heavily gilded with some staring metal. From the roof hung great lights which had been designed for gas but now carried incandescent bulbs. It was evening and light glared all over the great oblong and the astonishing red and blue pattern of the roof. There were perhaps three thousand people in this place, nearly all poor, and most of them dressed as the poor are dressed in this country—that is, anyhow. The gallery which ran around the hall was packed, and in the darkness under it young men and boys stood in close ranks. In the body of the hall, by a custom peculiar to Great Britain, many women of the middle class

were sprinkled, and the first front rows of chairs were filled with people of somewhat greater wealth than the mass; their faces were solemn, their eyes unobservant and slow. Before and above all these thousands, at the end of the great hall, was a vast platform of wood, like a stage. There was an organ upon it, very high, reaching to the roof, the gift of some one or other who had got wealth rapidly in the gambling and cheating of our time. There was further upon this platform a table covered with a red cloth, and two long rows of chairs. So long as the platform remained empty, a German with mild features played upon the organ to entertain the populace. But when a small side door opened and the head of a sort of small procession appeared, he ceased, and the dying away of his music was succeeded by storms of cheers. Of all those thousands more than half rose to their feet, and then others and others till nearly all were standing, and the shrill cries of the women were very audible above the other noises. At the corner of the gallery above the platform a young, lean, dark-haired man with fierce eager eyes, hissed continually: this noise also was noticeable among the rest.

The recipients of this public clamour filed slowly on to the stage. First came an elderly and corpu-

lent man in a narrow shirt-front shaped like a V, and having on the waistcoat of his evening clothes a giantic golden chain. He was bald, his beard was white, and he turned round continually as though making obeisance to those who followed. These were a man of middle age with hair as light as straw and watery weak eyes ; another of Jewish blood, with crisp hair, quick, alert face, and an air of decision about him.

Both of these last were Lords, and with them came the central figure of that evening, the Politician.

This man was not yet fifty. His eyes perpetually roved from point to point of the hall as he came in. His features were determined and strong, but his mouth unsteady ; it moved as nervously as did his eyes, and he clasped and unclasped his hands continually. His frame was well built—it was evident his health was good. His walk and manner and everything about him betrayed an intense concentration of interest in one thing, and might equally be said to have betrayed an ignorance of all others. This thing was the old complex and curious scheme of political action with its vague ceaseless phrases, its connotation of great wealth, the partial immunity of its actors from the action of law, and the pleasures of administration and of distant praise which it can bring ; nor could any

one have said, not even she who had borne him (and who still lived), which of the varied aspects of this old moribund thing pleased him most. For it all pleased him: the praise—the architecture of Westminster—the little feminine intrigues—the greasiness of officials—the work in Whitehall—the money. But on the whole, perhaps most of all—the money. He was long past that phase in such a life when the future may be doubtful: he was secure. But twenty-five years filled with poignant anxiety in the pursuit of that which he had attained had left him as I have said, unable to control his eyes or his hands.

After him trooped in the notabilities who were to sit upon the platform. Some of these also (as the modern national custom demands) were women. One was of the very centre of the governing class, the wife of the Jewish peer. The others were women of the middle classes, and the difference between the two was very noticeable, for the aristocrat did everything with a studied ease and repose, indistinguishable from that of an actress, while those of the middle class suffered somewhat. All these women were dressed in an expensive manner.

The corpulent man who presided upon that evening rose and spoke a few minutes in a husky voice, introducing the principal figure which sat

there next him, behind the red table, smiling (and smiling nervously) at the crowd.

When the corpulent man corpulently sat down, there was a great clapping of hands which lasted almost as long as had his little speech; and when the Politician rose the cheering began again as it had when he entered. There was the same roar of welcome and pride from the thousands, the same shrill noise from the women, and the same long hiss from the young eager man who favoured not the Politician but his uncle and brother who sat opposite him in the House of Commons. For this young man worked all day long amid the noise of machines, drank tea, ate ill-cooked food, and at night, by a gas-jet in his bare room, read books written by German atheists, but translated into English and sold at sixpence. These taught him the nature and origin of all things: and in his view the Politician was the champion of all things evil, but his brother and his uncle the champions of all things good.

The Politician, still smiling nervously, put up one hand to moderate too great a zeal in the affection of his fellow citizens: when the shouting came to an end, he began to speak.

His voice was singularly pleasing. It was

modulated in many tones, and had in it a sort of sympathy, as though he were speaking to one, and not to many; yet not his voice was the chief wonder, but the things he said with it.

He told them first how fateful was the moment, for that England had now to choose between the two principles upon which the fate of nations invariably depended; and pointed out the immediate disasters which would follow the one choice (to which his audience was not inclined), and the great life of vision and of splendour which would follow the other course, to which they were already pledged.

When he had thus emphasised the greatness of the great occasion on which they found themselves, he proceeded to relate their qualities and virtues, showing how judgment, patriotism, a readiness for sacrifice and an aptitude to do had ever characterised themselves and him. Nor did he omit to add that these advantages were in part due to the special and peculiar affection which their Creator felt for such as himself and them. And this, to the accompaniment of shouts of agreement he exemplified, contrasting their greater wealth, their more sober lives, their keener intelligence, their far more conspicuous courage against the lesser and meaner accidents of foreigners and

while he admitted that in all these his audience and himself were nearly approached by the people of the United States, whom he called Anglo-Saxons, and whom he affirmed to be the cousins of himself and of those who heard him, yet he would not yield a palm even to these.

He had now spoken for forty minutes, and approached more definite themes. For an hour he debated the importance of a certain law which had something of magical power in its mere name. The effect of the law was such that the rich and poor would remain in their respective stations; every time the name of that law escaped him, the great audience was moved as though by music.

He would, from time to time, lift from a small pile of sheets upon the table a quotation from the words of an opponent or a colleague, concerning this matter, reading those of his brother and his more famous uncle with a fine ring of contempt, as of something hateful; but those of his first cousin, his private secretary, and his mother's second husband with the sound approval of a judgment fixed and secure .

The great dead also were pressed into his service, and he quoted the names of those who had left their unmistakable stamp upon that sort of

occupation in which he was himself for the moment occupied, and who, like himself, enjoyed the money, the security and the vivacious play that accompany this form of achievement.

These great names he used also in another manner, which was to obtain repose. For when his voice weakened a little, he had but to mention in a loud and particular manner one of three or four speakers who would, were they now alive, presumably stand in his division of public action, to obtain many minutes of clapping and shouting during which his voice might take rest. He ended with a sentence the intonation of which was that of the clergy when they are in pursuit of their professional affairs, and the words composing which were no less than a catalogue of the great virtues, I mean tolerance, mercy, justice, courage, the love of freedom and the service of one's country. He sat down to the accompaniment of more noise, as prolonged as that to which he had risen; and the young man at the corner of the gallery forgot to hiss, so profoundly had the speech impressed his soul.

The pale European Lord rose, and told a humorous story to illustrate his position. The audience who had often heard this story before laughed with a familiar pleasure.

The Jewish Lord spoke next, lisping a little, but making his points clear. They also concerned the greatness of the virtues of those before him.

Next a woman spoke in a tender manner, and brought in the person of the Sovereign and the Royal Family. Nor did she omit to bring in also a detail of morals, on which she was unfortunately mad.

The corpulent gentleman asked for questions, and a burly man standing at the back of the hall asked the Politician whether nations did not prosper under the conditions of justice, freedom and toleration ? The reply was in the affirmative.

A little, excitable man next jumped up, and began a violent harangue against usury and was thrown out ; but not without great difficulty, for his energy was amazing.

A pawnbroker proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman. Next poetry was proposed—the audience sang, the platform passed away, and all departed, some fighting at the doors.

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